Making Sense of CPD Policy: The Quest for Transformation of Teacher Professionalism in Malaysia

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Abstract

This research investigates how teachers in Malaysia are experiencing recent changes in the direction of their Continuing Professional Development (CPD) which have shaped their sense of professionalism. The new CPD policy known as the *Pelan Pembangunan Professionalisme Berterusan* (PPPB), has been developed by the Ministry of Education but is profoundly influenced by the results of international student assessments. It is intended as an instrument to develop a teaching workforce that would turn Malaysia into a top performing nation in international assessments, such as (and particularly) Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). Teachers, however, must understand the choices and decisions made by the Government and to accept, adapt or ignore the possibilities created for their professional development. The research in this study is guided by a review of international literature on educational change, the influences of globalisation on policy trends and practices as well as teacher professionalism.

The research adopts interpretivism as an epistemological stance and had two strands. The PPPB policy was investigated through review and interviews with policymakers involved in writing the policy. Teachers' perspectives on the policy were collected through focus groups and individual face-to-face interviews. By exploring teachers' perspectives on policy rhetoric, the Spectrum of CPD Model developed by Kennedy (2014) is employed to analyse and evaluate the policy. Indeed, this is especially useful in determining the level of synchronisation between the directions set in the policy and the policy's intended outcomes. The findings suggested that teachers question and challenge the nature of the policy and its implementation which have adversely affected their mindset and attitude, in turn, impacting their involvement and commitment towards implementing the present system-wide reform.

When the PPPB Model of CPD is positioned within the global context of teacher professionalism, it is argued that the dominant conception of professionalism reflects rather, a managerial perspective and adopts a standards-based approach. In other words, professionalism relates to the needs of an individual teacher to meet and maintain prescribed government standards. Further, it was found that a collaborative concept of professionalism within the policy is limited, indicating that teachers continue to remain a compliant workforce. Although professionalism is being cast into the direction that the Government considers to be the best fit, in the current teaching profession, teachers are deploying and working towards different concepts of professionalism. Therefore, this transformation strategy, for teacher professionalism, could be much better understood as the Government's attempt to change not only the public's perception of teachers and teaching but also how teachers themselves view their own professional roles and practice.

Nevertheless, some teachers may have struggled in the process of changing their existing controlled-compliant professionalism (which requires them to comply with the Government's change agenda) into more collaborative-activist professionalism that adopts collaborative work cultures. In this vein, professionalism emerging from the managerial and democratic discourses is not static or two-dimensional but instead, evolves and changes according to the teachers' working conditions thereby allowing the teachers to embrace several discourses of professionalism simultaneously. In brief, this study represents the relationship between CPD and professionalism and the range of conflicting models that co-exist when a system is in a state of change. Its main contribution to knowledge is to evidence and theorise the unevenness of change and the contradictory views of CPD-professionalism that different types of CPD models can generate. The unevenness of change that happens in educational reform contributes to the transition of teacher professionalism being discursive in nature and is influenced by the realities of teachers' work and practice.

Keywords: CPD, teacher professionalism, professional learning policymaking, policy implementation, policy borrowing,

Dedication

For my husband, Zamri Razali and my boys, Adam, Iman, Aqil, Aidil and Irfan who in many ways have played a role in making this journey memorable and this dream possible.

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Author’s Declaration

I declare that the work in this dissertation was carried out in accordance with the requirements of the University's Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes and that it has not been submitted for any other academic award. Except where indicated by specific reference in the text, the work is the candidate's own work. Work done in collaboration with, or with the assistance of, others, is indicated as such. Any views expressed in the dissertation are those of the author.

SIGNED: ..... DATE: ….26/11/2018…….

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List of Abbreviations

APTIS	Assess English Skills
BLUEPRINT	*Pelan Pembangunan Pendidikan Malaysia* (The Malaysia Education Blueprint)
CEFR	Common European Framework of Reference for Languages
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CRK	*Cuti Rehat Khas* (Special Leave for Teachers)
DEO	District Education Office
DTP	District Transformation Programme
EDMP	Education Development Master Plan 2006-2010
EFA	Education for All
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
EPRD	Education Planning and Research Division
EPU	Economic Planning Unit
ETP	Economic Transformation Programme
GTP	Government Transformation Programme
IAB	*Institut Aminuddin Baki* (The National Institute of Educational Management and Leadership, Malaysia)
IEA	International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement
INSET	In-service Training
ITE	Institute of Teacher Education
LO	Learning Organisation
MINISTRY	Ministry of Education (Malaysia)
MP	Malaysia Plan
NDP	National Development Plan
NEM	New Economic Model
NEP	National Economic Policy
NIE	National Institute of Education (Singapore)

NKRA	National Key Result Area
NPE	National Philosophy of Education
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
PADU	Education Performance and Delivery Unit
PEMANDU	Performance Management and Delivery Unit
PISMP	*Program Ijazah Sarjana Muda Pendidikan* (Bachelor of Education Programme)
PiPPB	*Pelan Induk Pembangunan Profesionalisme Berterusan* (CPD Master Plan)
PiPPK	*Pelan Induk Pembangunan Professionalisme Keguruan* (Teacher Professionalism and Development Master Plan)
PIRLS	Progress in International Reading Literacy Study
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
PLC	Professional Learning Community
PPGB	*Program Pembangunan Guru Baharu* (New Teacher Development Programme)
PPPB	*Pelan Pembangunan Profesionalisme Berterusan*
PPSMI	*Pengajaran dan Pembelajaran Sains dan Matematik dalam Bahasa Inggeris* (Teaching and Learning Science and Mathematics in English)
RC	Resource Centre
SABER	Systems Approach for Better Education Results
SBP	*Sekolah Berasrama Penuh* (Fully Residential School)
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SEO	State Education Office
SGM	*Standard Guru Malaysia* (Malaysia Teacher Standard)
SISC	School Improvement Specialist Coaches
SIP	School Improvement Partner
SOE	School of Education (University of Bristol)
TAC	Teacher Activity Centre

TALIS	Teaching and Learning International Survey
TED	Teacher Education Division
TIMSS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
TNA	Training Needs Analysis
TNLC	Teacher Network Learning Circles
TTC	Teacher Training Centre
UI	Unified Instrument
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

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Chapter 1
Overview of the Study

1.1 Introduction

In Malaysia, being a teacher is different from being a teacher a generation ago. Education is changing rapidly and constantly as part of the globalisation process. Teachers are expected to prepare and help students achieve their best potential in order to survive life's many challenges, especially given today's increasingly competitive environment. It follows that teachers need a new kind of professional learning, which enables them to go beyond completing the curriculum to facilitating better learning experiences for students. This scenario applies internationally. Wherever they are, teachers of the 21st-century are increasingly expected to provide the highest quality of teaching and they are central in governments' political agenda.

Underpinned by the assumption that teachers are the most significant influence on student learning (Mourshed et al., 2010), Malaysia is embarking on a journey of reforming teachers' work and practice along with other strategies to improve both the quality of teachers and teaching. This aspiration is to be achieved through a new Continuing Professional Development (CPD) policy known as the *Pelan Pembangunan Professionalisme Berterusan* (PPPB), which is an ongoing initiative under the current system-wide reform; the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013 – 2025 (referred to as the 'Blueprint'). The establishment of the PPPB policy is seen as the Ministry of Education's (the Ministry) ongoing effort to transform CPD practice and to provide teachers with appropriate supports to help them "achieve their full potential" (Ministry of Education, 2013: E-14) as well as to prepare them for the challenges of the 21st-century teaching and learning. In the context of the present reform, the aim of CPD appears to be twofold: to support the implementation of the overall reform objectives

outlined in the Blueprint and simultaneously promote teachers' individual professional development.

The Blueprint highlights Malaysia's ambition to be positioned amongst the top third of high-performing countries, along with Singapore, Finland, Japan and South Korea, in international student tests, namely; the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) within the next 12 years. Accordingly, Malaysia is rapidly developing the ambition to be a high-income and developed country, benefiting from globalisation and a significant player in international forums along with members of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (Mahathir, 1991). Towards this end, educational reform is seen as a strategic element to elevate a country's economic status and its competitiveness globally. Malaysia subscribes to OECD's human capital logic whereby quality education creates a citizenry that is both competitive in a global skills market and will attract and help to build industries in Malaysia (Crossley, 2014; Barrett and Crossley, 2015; Schleicher, 2016). Put differently, the Ministry appears to believe that quality education systems require quality teachers. Nevertheless, this raises the question of how the Ministry understands teacher quality; whether it is defined by its own definition and understanding of quality or is influenced by the meaning of quality as promoted by international agencies.

Within the present education system, teachers now need to embrace the perspectives brought about by the 21st-century regarding teaching and learning and to reconsider their traditional teaching roles (Darling-Hammond, 2006). Indeed, the goal is to make the roles of teachers relevant to contemporary student learning needs. Furthermore, the Ministry's ambition is to establish a continuous and lifelong learning culture among Malaysian teachers. In the future, teachers will be expected to have the ability to work collaboratively and to regulate their own professional growth as a means to improve teaching quality (Cordingley et al., 2003; Timperley, et al., 2007;

Sachs, 2007; Darling-Hammond and Richardson, 2009). Therefore, based on the changing expectations of teachers, this study compares the aspirations of the said policy for teachers and teaching and how policy is experienced and implemented at the 'grass roots' level.

Hence, this introductory chapter provides an overview of the study beginning with an introduction to the focus and rationale for the study. Next, the research aims, objectives and summary of the theoretical framing underpinning the study, the research methodology and methods are presented and explained. The structure of the dissertation is included at the end of the chapter.

1.2 Rationale for the Study

The rationale of the study is presented in three parts; the general, contextual and personal rationale.

1.2.1 General rationale

Observation of the contemporary educational policy discourse has seen that the majority of educational policies are underpinned by human capital logic. In fact, the quality workforce is assumed as one of the critical aspects to ensure a country's competitiveness in the local and global economies (Rizvi and Lingard, 2010). Due to this assumption, teachers play an important role in student learning. Many studies have recognised that the relationship between teachers and their pedagogical practices are crucial in improving student learning (Hayes et al., 2006; Hattie, 2009). In fact, other researches have shown that teacher professional development influences student achievement and contribute to improved learning experiences (Hattie, 2003; Yoon et al., 2007; Darling-Hammond, 2012); although little or no evidence suggests an association between teacher CPD and learning outcomes. As a result, countries strive to improve their education systems by learning from and adopting 'best practices' observed in other countries. Also, as part of the effort to improve the standard and

quality of education, attempts aimed at developing teacher and teaching quality have in turn become a significant issue in the production of education policies globally.

So, why focus on teachers? Most educational reforms recognise that their vital role and professional development is often perceived as an important element of effective education reforms (Cardno, 2005). Reform is not a 'constant change' but rather, a special case of a wide-ranging change that may be implemented over many years and requires a change not only on teachers' practices but also regarding their educational values (Osborn et al., 2000). Although reforms highlight the roles and values of teachers, there is a need for "…a new way of thinking about educational change that takes into account the complex nature of teaching, teacher learning and the change process" (Hoban, 2002: 21). Hence, it is important to explore the influences that contribute to the willingness of teachers to accept, adapt and adopt changes in their work and practices. In this respect, examining the experiences of teachers in the process of educational change is extremely important.

Understanding how teachers view and respond to change may also elucidate effective policy formulation and the kind of support that will enable teachers to adapt to wide-ranging reform. Likewise, reform on teacher professionalism through the transformation of their engagement with CPD is viewed as a strategy that may contribute towards improving the learning outcomes of students. Therefore, it is vital to examine the underpinning perspectives on professionalism that shape CPD policies (Kennedy, 2014). Furthermore, it is equally important to explore how the policy and expectations will lead towards changing some of the professional values of teachers (Broadfoot and Osborn, 1988; Webb et al., 2004).

1.2.2 The Malaysian rationale

The education sector in Malaysia usually receives the most significant, if not the largest share of the national budget. In 2015, the Government allocated RM56 billion under the education and training budget ("Bajet 2015", 2014, para. 1) which is larger compared to previous years. The size of the budget is an indication that the Government places significant emphasis and attention on education as a means for economic and social development. However, despite such investment, education in Malaysia remains below that of international standards. One reason for this, as cited in the public media is the low performance and quality of teachers which is described, as follows:

> They [teachers] have no commitment and are not academically progressive; the problem also rests with the selection and training of teachers, the monitoring and measuring of performance of teachers, the remuneration and reward of teachers and school management and; low-quality educators are behind Malaysia's placement among poor third-world nations (Yap, 2015, para 2 - 10).

This is confirmed by research, which has suggested that teachers are still very much bound to conventional teaching methods and are unable to adapt their teaching strategies with the various student learning styles or to teach higher level thinking skills (Saleh and Aziz, 2012; Tan and Arshad, 2013; Othman and Mohamad 2014).

In response to the public's concern, the Government established the system-wide educational reform initiative through the eleven 'Shifts' outlined in the Blueprint (Ministry of Education, 2013):

1. Provide equal access to quality education of an international standard;
2. Ensure every child is proficient in *Bahasa Malaysia* and the English Language;
3. Develop value-driven Malaysians;

4. Transform teaching into the profession of choice;
5. Ensure high-performing school leaders in every school;
6. Empower State Education Offices (SEO), District Education; Office (DEO) and schools to customise solutions based on need;
7. Leverage ICT to scale up quality learning across Malaysia;
8. Transform delivery capabilities and capacity of the Ministry;
9. Partner with parents, community and the private sector at scale;
10. Maximise student outcomes for every ringgit spent; and
11. Increase transparency for direct accountability.

One of the main highlights of the Blueprint is the ambition to position Malaysia within the top third high-performing systems globally based on international indicators and league tables such as PISA by 2025. However, the ability for Malaysia to achieve this outcome remains unclear as it has only been five years since the implementation of the Blueprint.

Nonetheless, comparative researchers challenge the uncritical use of international surveys such as PISA and the assumption of transferability of policies and practices (Steiner-Khamsi, 2004; Cowen, 2006; Barrett and Crossley, 2015). For example, what works and how it works in Malaysia may be entirely different from what works in Singapore or Korea. On this point, Morris (2015: 471) cautions the interrelated assumptions made based on PISA findings that are rarely explicit and are often "persuasively presented and providing policymakers with a clear logic for reform". Thus, it is noteworthy to consider carefully how international influence has impacted the Malaysian education system, particularly, with regards to reforming the teaching profession through examination of the PPPB policy. Therefore, focusing on the role of teacher professional development as a

component of educational reform, this study will generate suggestions to policymakers in further consideration towards improving the formulation of CPD policies and strategies for its application through the representation of the teachers' voice.

1.2.3 Personal rationale

The motivation to pursue this research stems from my keen interest in the field of educational policy especially the policies related to teacher professionalism. As a novice policymaker, I wanted to gain further knowledge about the policy processes in education. Furthermore, this study also provided me with an opportunity to reflect upon my role as an education officer in the Ministry responsible for professional teacher learning. Based on my observations and experience, although some teachers do not favour attending CPD planned by the Ministry, they still participate out of the obligation to do so. As a policymaker, I was frustrated at not having a sense of how teachers would receive the policy. Also, based on my own experience as a former teacher, more often than not, teachers were not consulted in the policy formulation process, and policy discussions seemed quite remote from the schools, classrooms and the day-to-day lives of practising teachers. Since I was involved in formulating the PPPB policy, I personally became interested in finding out the nature of teachers' responses to the policy and how they perceived the changing expectations in their CPD engagement when the PPPB policy was made known to the education community.

1.3 Research Aims and Objectives

The study examines the ways and means by which the CPD policy in Malaysia influences practising teachers' professionalism in the educational reform setting. In light of related international trends and developments, the research focuses upon the new CPD policy, the

PPPB, which was initially introduced as part of the large-scale reform agenda outlined in the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013–2025.

The research aims to examine the development and initial implementation of the PPPB policy and investigates how teachers experience and view the new CPD process and expectations. These aims were achieved through the following research objectives, to:

1. Critically review the international literature relating to the changing approaches to teacher CPD in the context of reform and the influence of international trends and models;
2. Provide a historical account of the development of the Malaysian education policy context within which the PPPB was formulated;
3. Critically analyse the origins, development and initial implementation of the PPPB policy through critical review of policy documents and other primary sources and qualitative interviews with key policymakers;
4. Examine practising teachers' experiences and perceptions of the PPPB policy through qualitative interviews;
5. Consider the implications of the study for ongoing policy and practice related to CPD in the Malaysian education system; and
6. Explore implications for the related theoretical literature on CPD as a component of educational reform and identify priorities for future research.

1.4 Research Questions

The following research questions guide the empirical part of the study:

1. What are the underlying concepts and models of CPD that inform the PPPB policy?
2. What are practising teachers' experiences and views of the initial implementation of the PPPB policy approach to CPD?
3. How has the PPPB policy influenced teachers' engagement with CPD and their professional practice?

1.5 Theoretical Framing: An Overview

This section introduces the theoretical framing and key conceptual ideas that underpinned this study. While a broad range of literature is considered regarding policy formulation and implementation, this research looks closely at the literature on policy-borrowing in education reform (Crossley and Watson, 2003; Philips and Ochs, 2004; Cowen, 2006; Steiner-Khamsi, 2014) and teachers changing professionalism in the contexts of reform (Day and Sachs, 2004; Wedell, 2009; Webb, 2010). Education policy reform at the national level can only be understood by recognising the mechanics and influence of international policy-borrowing. In particular, policy-borrowing from countries that come out on top in international assessment studies thereby resulting in a degree of homogeneity across national policies could be characterised as a global teacher education reform agenda. Sahlberg (2006: 259 – 260) notes for instance:

> Education reforms in different countries today share similar assumptions, values and characteristics due to the endless flow of information and harmonisation of education policies through increased global educational borrowing and lending.

It is, therefore, fundamental to consider the literature on policy borrowing in the literature review chapter of this study. Besides, there is a need for a more in-depth understanding of the relationship between the context, "the local, social embeddedness of educational phenomena" and transfer, and "the movement of educational ideas, policies and practices from one place to another, normally across a national boundary" (Cowen, 2006: 561). This review is vital in comprehending how global trends in educational policy in general and, more specifically for teacher CPD are constructed.

Next, in understanding how education reform is experienced by teachers and influences their practice, much of the literature indicated the necessity to consider CPD and the positioning of teachers within the reform agenda (Smit, 2003; Sachs, 2007; Maughan et al., 2012). Despite the changes anticipated through education reform initiatives, the literature suggests that they also present challenges to teachers both as individuals and as professionals (McNess, 2004; Tiongson, 2005; Serdyukov, 2017). "One test of teachers' professional development is its capacity to equip teachers individually and collectively to act as shapers, promoters, and well-informed critics of reform" (Rizvi, 2003: 39). These demands to change their roles and practice may result in conflicts particularly where policy and individual teachers' main concerns are not aligned (McNess et al., 2003). Hence, it is necessary to investigate whether CPD plays a critical role in assisting teachers to understand and realise their position as agentic actors within the reform agenda together with their sense of professionalism because reform not only affects what people do but also changes who they are (Ball, 2003).

The literature on teachers' responses to change also offers insights into how teachers perceive, experience and respond to the changing expectations of teachers' engagement with CPD (Hargreaves, 2004; Reeves, 2008; Gray et al., 2012). The understanding and awareness of what needs to change and why are initial steps in

enabling change to occur. Although there is widespread consensus that participation in CPD is assumed to benefit practising teachers, several issues regarding the effectiveness of CPD practice are also highlighted. Thus, a section on changes in the CPD literature is included to elucidate terminologies used within the thesis; explore various approaches to CPD, and to examine features of effective CPD (Day, 1999; Bredeson, 2002).

In addition, countries' efforts in searching for the 'best methods' to enable students to learn better have influenced how teacher CPD is structured (OECD, 2013). For instance, in many countries, CPD is used as a mechanism to shape teachers' professionalism and much information regarding this can be drawn from the analysis of policies related to teachers' professional learning. Looking closely at Kennedy's (2014) framework on Spectrum of CPD Models and Sachs' (2016) discussion on the views of teacher professionalism, this study argues CPD that 'works' or is identified as effective in high-performing countries could not simply be borrowed and used elsewhere. Indeed, it is crucial to recognise the kind of professionalism promoted initially, and the kind of CPD advocated by the high-performing countries before adopting them into local education policies.

In brief, the search for a 'better quality' education has resulted in countries valuing large-scale international student assessments as performance indicators against their national systems. While international comparisons contribute to the understanding of trends and models through the movement of educational policies, little is known about "how policy is experienced in diverse cultural and historical contexts, where differing ideologies inform individual teachers' values" (McNess, 2004: 316). Therefore, this means that although CPD is viewed as one of the important mechanisms for change in teachers' practice and policies regarding teacher learning, they are often developed based on 'best practices' internationally, as teachers' responses to innovation vary. Such diversity serves to create a

complexity of implementation which can only be fully understood by looking closely at the context of reform and the perspectives of the people involved. As such, the study is framed within the conception of how CPD policies are positioned within the reform agenda influence teachers' sense of professionalism. See Chapter 3 for the full literature review.

1.6 Research Methodology and Methods: An Overview

The main focus of this study is to explore how secondary school teachers experience and view CPD expectations within the PPPB policy. As this study centres very much on generating understandings of the research topic from the teachers' perspectives, I decided to pursue this research from within the interpretive paradigm. The main objective of interpretivism is not only to comprehend personal experiences and people's interpretations, but also to understand the context as it is crucial in the interpretation of the data gathered in any form of research (Willis et al., 2007). In line with this paradigm, I employed qualitative research design as it allows for the exploration of richness, depth, and complexity of the research subjects and the policy being researched by constructing an understanding of reality in which meanings are constructed throughout the research process (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). Specifically, through a comparison between how CPD policy is constructed and understood, I examined the policy formulation process from the policymakers' point of view and the constraints of policy implementation from the teachers' standpoint.

The data collected at two different levels helped to address the research questions formulated in this study. For the policy research, to understand policy formulation, I analysed the PPPB policy, paying close attention to the international influences on its underlying conceptualisations of teacher professionalism and CPD. I also interviewed ten policymakers, who contributed towards authorship of the document. As an author, my own experience in developing the

policy contributed to a greater understanding of the context within which the policy was developed. For the teacher research, I conducted a total of three focus group interview sessions with twelve teachers from three different schools to gather data on teachers' experiences in implementing the said policy. To gain more profound insights into the phenomena being studied, I also carried out several individual face-to-face interview sessions with three teachers from the three schools. Multiple data collection methods were employed to obtain these data including documentary analysis, collegial dialogue, focus groups and individual face-to-face interviews. Finally, thematic analysis was employed, aided by the use of MAXQDA software to analyse all the research data.

Chapter 4 provides the full elaboration and discussion of the research methodology and methods used in the study.

1.7 Structure of the Dissertation

This thesis is divided into eight chapters. This chapter has introduced the study through an introduction to the topic, the rationale for the study, the research aims, objectives, the overviews of the theoretical framework and research methodology and methods. The next chapter elaborates on the research problem and the background of the context within which the research was conducted. Chapter 3 reviews the international literature related to educational reform, teacher CPD and professionalism, which generate the theoretical framing for the research and strengthens the rationale for the study. Chapter 4 offers an in-depth elaboration of methodological aspects of the study and explains the interpretive positioning, justification for the research design, and methods used in the field, along with researcher positionality in relation to the research. The findings are next presented in Chapters 5 and 6. A discussion of the interpreted findings is provided in Chapter 7 which focuses on the relationships between the policy intentions and the actual process of implementation in the light of the

theoretical framing. Finally, Chapter 8 summarises the findings and implications based on the research findings and data analysis. The chapter also documents the contributions, recommendations, limitations of the study, along with suggestions for future research and concludes with a personal reflection of the learning gained through the process.

Chapter 2
CPD in the Malaysian Education Context: A Strategy to Improve Teacher Quality

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the review on the position of teacher CPD in the Malaysian education context as one of the mechanisms used by the Government to improve the quality of teachers and teaching. The review includes a brief description of the history and development of educational policies, especially those related to teacher professional learning and other relevant strategies and changes implemented in the education system before the introduction of the Blueprint. Accordingly, knowledge about these contexts is essential to provide a clearer picture and perspective of the rationale behind the current educational reform and the need for the PPPB policy. Discussion of the reasons for focusing on the policy is also included as part of this chapter.

2.2 Understanding Malaysia

Malaysia is a country located in Southeast Asia consisting of two regions, Peninsular Malaysia and East Malaysia. The country comprises of 13 states and three federal territories. In Peninsular Malaysia, there are 11 states and two federal territories, Kuala Lumpur and Putrajaya. Separated by the South China Sea, Sabah, Sarawak and another federal territory, Labuan is located in East Malaysia. The country covers approximately 329,758 square kilometres. Despite the geographical size, historically, its economic importance is beyond comparison to its size and population.

Looking at Figure 2.1, Malaysia is the only country where both parts; mainland Asia and the massive archipelago extend westward from the Philippines and New Guinea to Sumatra. Due to its location, Malaysia connects the mainland and island Asia which is the gateway between the South China Sea and the Indian Ocean. The strategic

location at one of the world's busiest sea lanes has continually positioned the country as a valuable and significant key player in the economy of the Southeast Asian region.

Figure 2.1: The map of Malaysia (britannica.com, 2018)

2.2.1 A glance at the history

To understand the progression of Malaysia as an independent nation, we must glimpse briefly at the post-war history. Before gaining independence, Malaysia, formerly known as Malaya, had been invaded by foreign controls given its strategic trading location in Southeast Asia. The Portuguese were believed to have colonised Malacca (one of the states of Malaya) in 1511. During this time, Malacca was seen as an important commercial centre, attracting trade from around the region as well as from China and India.

A century later, the Portuguese were forced to leave by the Dutch. Not long after, the British acquired Malacca and Singapore from the Dutch. Under the British colonialism, they brought in immigrants from southern China to work in tin mines, and immigrants from southern India worked on the plantations. This action had facilitated Malaya's transition from a trading port to a commodity producer ("Malaysia: History", n.d., para. 4). Accordingly, the arrival of these immigrants has also led to the presence of multiculturism in Malaysia today.

Malaya continued to be controlled by the British until the Japanese occupation in 1941. However, in 1945, the Japanese army surrendered to the Allied forces, and the British returned to Malaya. It was on 31st August 1957 that Malaya was finally granted independence through peaceful negotiations with the British. Sabah, Sarawak and Singapore joined the Federations of Malaya on 16th September 1963 which then formed Malaysia, but Singapore became an independent country in 1965. Regardless, both countries have continued to have ongoing relationships ever since.

2.2.2 Malaysia Today

Malaysia is a country with a monsoon climate in which the weather is normally hot and humid all year round. The Malaysian population consists of approximately 32.3 million (Bumiputera (67.4 %), Chinese (24.6 %), Indians (7.3 %) and others (0.7 %)) (Malaysian Department of Statistics, 2018). The Malays are the largest ethnic group in Peninsular Malaysia which comprised of 63.1 percent, and who are defined in the constitution as Muslims. In Sarawak, the Ibans constituted 30.3 percent of the entire population while Kadazan/Dusun represented 24.5 percent in Sabah. Since its independence, the official religion of the country is Islam, but other religions such as Buddhism, Christianity and Hinduism are given the freedom of practice.

Bahasa Melayu[1] is recognised as the national language of the country, but English and other local languages are widely spoken. This multicultural diversity has demanded the Government to respect the varied needs of the people and treat them with great sensitivity, and respect to ensure peace and harmony in the country. A discussion on the Government's approaches to social cohesion through education will be discussed in the later section of the chapter.

In 2017, with an income per capita of 28, 681 PPP Dollars, Malaysia was ranked as the third wealthiest country in Southeast Asia behind Singapore and Brunei (World Bank, 2017). Presently, Malaysia is acknowledged as one of the "The Big 6" countries that has the highest rate of economic growth in the world together with Singapore, Indonesia, Thailand, the Philippines and Vietnam ("Report: Southeast Asia", n.d.). Likewise, the World Economic Forum's Global Competitiveness Report 2017 – 2018 showed that Malaysia is now ranked at the 23rd position out of 137 countries, while at the same time, is acknowledged as the region's top emerging economy ahead of China which is placed at 27th (World Economic Forum, 2017). Due to its competitive economy, Malaysia is predicted to achieve the high-income country status between 2020 and 2024 (World Bank, 2017). Also, the abovementioned statements are an indication that Malaysia has strong and stable economic growth internationally.

Regarding its political structure, the trace of British colonialism remains evident. Malaysia followed the Westminster parliamentary system which adopted the "federal representative democratic constitutional monarchy" headed by the Yang di-Pertuan Agong (King) as the leader of the country and a Prime Minister as the head of government ("Politics of Malaysia", n.d.). The Parliament includes the Dewan Negara (Upper House) and Dewan Rakyat (Lower House). Under the bilateral legislative system, the Federal Constitution

[1] The terms 'Bahasa Melayu' and 'Bahasa Malaysia' are used interchangeably in the dissertation.

postulates that the Malaysian Government consists of the Executive, Judiciary and Legislative branch (ibid). Among these three administrative components, the Executive branch has the most power and authority leading to the centralisation of decision-making in the Government.

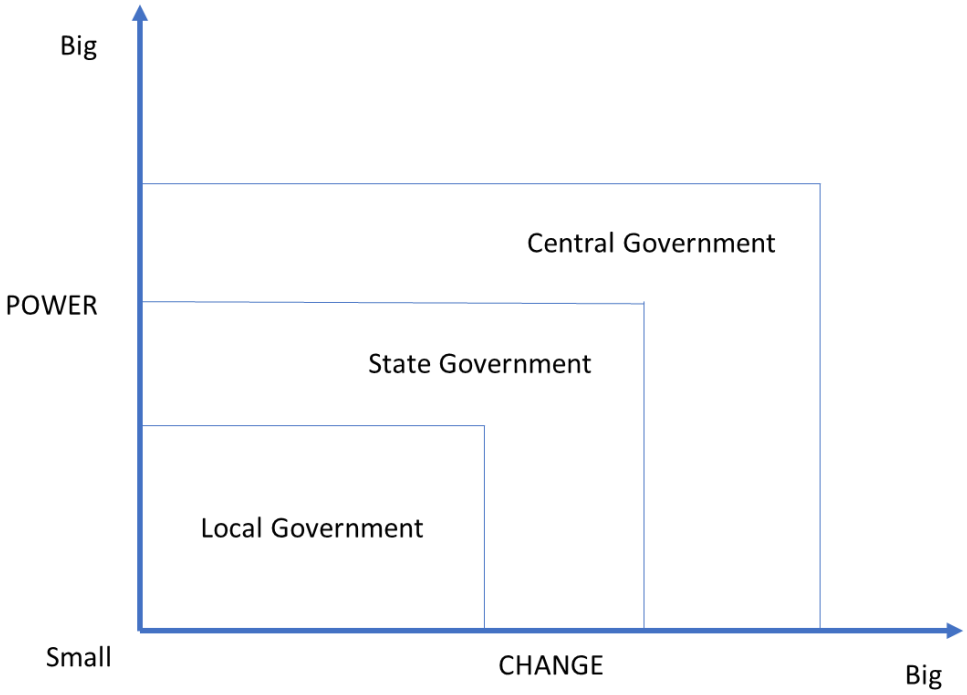


Figure 2.2: Power to develop and implement policies in Malaysia (Sufean, 2009 cited in Mohd Noor and Symaco, 2017: 69)

Furthermore, due to the social composition of the people, Malaysia practices the concept of federalism as a way to link the function between the state and federal government as well as to reinforce its political control (Mohd Noor, 2013). This model of federalism means that the centralisation of legislative and executive powers lies within the federal government as illustrated in Figure 2.2 above. The local and state governments have limited authorities as compared to the central government. Further, the central government has authorities over matters like education, national defence, civil laws

and international trades, while state governments have control albeit limited, on matters concerning Islam, management of state's lands and its customary laws (ibid). As a result of this kind of administrative structure, the policy development process in Malaysia involves:

> State institutions and apparatus to form a powerful policy elite which is seen to maintain tight control over public policy including–education–imposing a policy agenda on practitioners (Mohd Noor, 2013: 82).

Such system and structure appear to provide stronger control by the central administration, presumably leading to nation-building. Also, due to the centralisation of powers, democratic consultation and participation are limited or non-existent in the process of policy development. Similar policy development framework applies to most national policies including educational policies. The process of educational policy planning and development will be discussed further in Section 2.3.2.

2.3 The Malaysian Education System and Structure

There have been many changes in the Malaysian education since the British colonialism era, and the country has continually reformed its education system due to many factors including the changes in politics and leadership. The development of the education system in Malaysia could be divided into two main eras; pre-independence and post-independence.

2.3.1 Education system in the pre-independence era

The educational system in Malaya during the British colonisation resembled the British education system but was instead, tailored to suit local conditions. Students during that time attended primary school for six years, lower secondary for three years, and upper secondary education for two years (Hirschman, 1972). The education system

includes vernacular schools that use four different languages as the medium of instruction: Malay, English, Tamil and Chinese (Jamil et al., 2010) which was a result of the British's 'divide and rule' ideology (Rudner, 1977). Under this ideology, the medium of instructions for education was their mother tongues, and they needed to accept the roles given to them. The British governed and lived in the city, the Malays worked in agriculture and stayed in villages, the Chinese were involved in mining and commerce while the Indians worked in plantations and estates. This 'laissez-faire' concept has led to the status quo and the identification of the different ethnicities in Malaya according to their economic activities.

The existence of the four types of vernacular schools and the absence of a common education system and structure until independence further resulted in the segregation of the people according to their ethnicities. Due to these circumstances, what was apparent after Malaya achieved independence were the empirical regularities. During this period, there was no proper system of education, and the population was merely a collection of three main races, neatly separated from each other. Malaya then was anything but a nation. Thus, it is within this background that education became "a critical instrument for the consolidation of political authority" (Thomas, 2009: 121). Education was then used as a medium to resolve ethnic, human capital and educational issues in the country. The pressing need, at the outset of independence, was the need to unite the people irrespective of their ethnicities; the necessity to improve the skill level of the workforce and the need to establish a system of education that is nationally characterised. In other words, educational policies have always reflected the demand to fulfil national development needs and have been one of the crucial factors in nation-building (Ahmad, 1998).

2.3.2 Education system in the post-independence era

In the present Malaysian system, primary, secondary and tertiary level education are under separate management[2]. The Ministry of Education is responsible for the administration of public education at the primary and secondary levels while the Ministry of Higher Education is responsible for tertiary education. Figure 2.3 below outlines the current education system practised in Malaysia. Education at the primary (six years) and secondary (five years) levels are free. Under the public education schooling system, children may attend preschool at the age of 5 or 6 years old. Primary education begins at the age of 7 and lasts for six years.

At the end of their primary schooling, students usually sit for a Primary School Achievement Test. The result of this test is used for placement in selected secondary schools. Students who achieve excellent results in the test are usually offered to attend Fully Residential Schools or *Sekolah Berasrama Penuh* (SBP). Students attending SBP are nurtured to excel in academics and extracurricular activities. This selective system, however, in some ways contributed to the notion that academic performance is an imperative element in the Malaysian education system and promoted competition among students. Secondary education, on the other hand, lasts for five years, from Form 1 to Form 5.

Students attending secondary schools sit for two national tests; one when they are in Form 3 and another test when they are in Form 5. The assessment that students sit for in Form 5, known as the Malaysia Certificate of Education determines students' enrolment to post-secondary education before entering university.

[2] After the recent 2018 General Election, both ministries are now combined and known as the Ministry of Education.

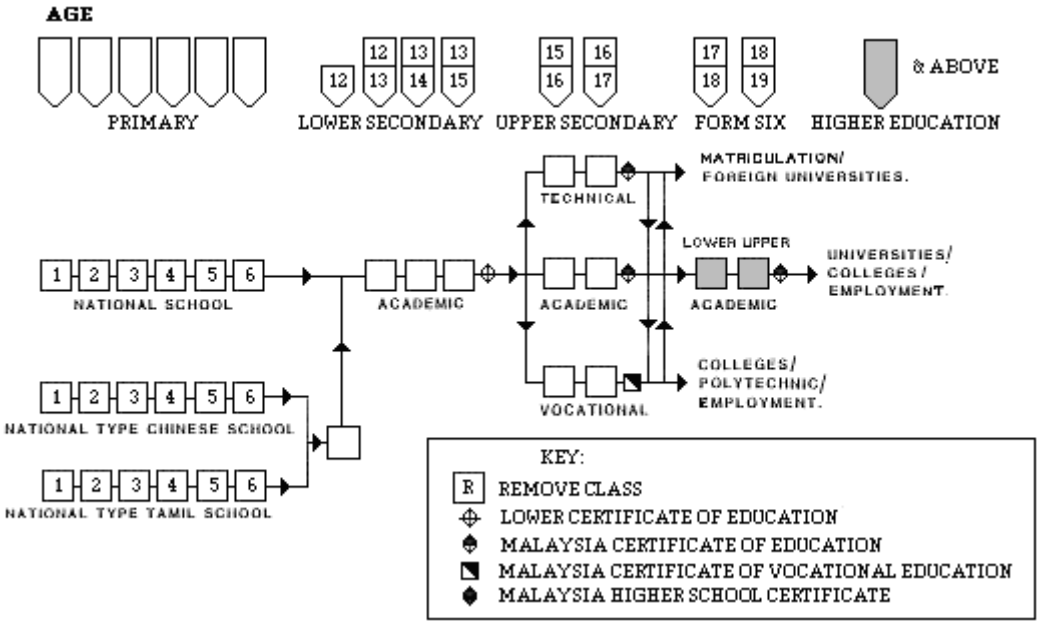


Figure 2.3: Structure of the Malaysian education system (UNESCO, 2006)

The Malaysian education system has achieved remarkable progress since its independence on 31st August 1957 with a significant improvement regarding access to education. At the inception of independence, only 6 % of children were enrolled at the secondary school level, and only 1 % managed to pursue further education at the tertiary level (Ministry of Education, 2012). At present, access to education in Malaysia has improved the near-universal enrolment rate with primary and secondary enrolment rates now reaching 80 %. "Around two-thirds of students go on to some form of post-secondary education or training, from pre-university, foundation, matriculation or vocational programmes." (Ministry of Education, 2013: 1-2).

Malaysia has adopted an education system targeted at both social and political integration. The Ministry of Education is placed within the public service, and teachers make up the majority of the 1.6 million civil servant population in Malaysia (Cheng, 2017, para. 1). As is with other national policies, education is centrally managed at the federal level. According to Mohd Noor and Symaco (2017), education

planning in Malaysia is centralised under the Education Planning and Research Division (EPRD) which acts as the secretariat. The Education Planning Committee chaired by the Minister of Education is the highest agency under the Ministry that formulates, coordinates and determines national education policies (ibid). This committee gives final approval to every national education policy (Mohd Noor, 2013; Hamid, 2017). Figure 2.4 below is illustrative of this structure.

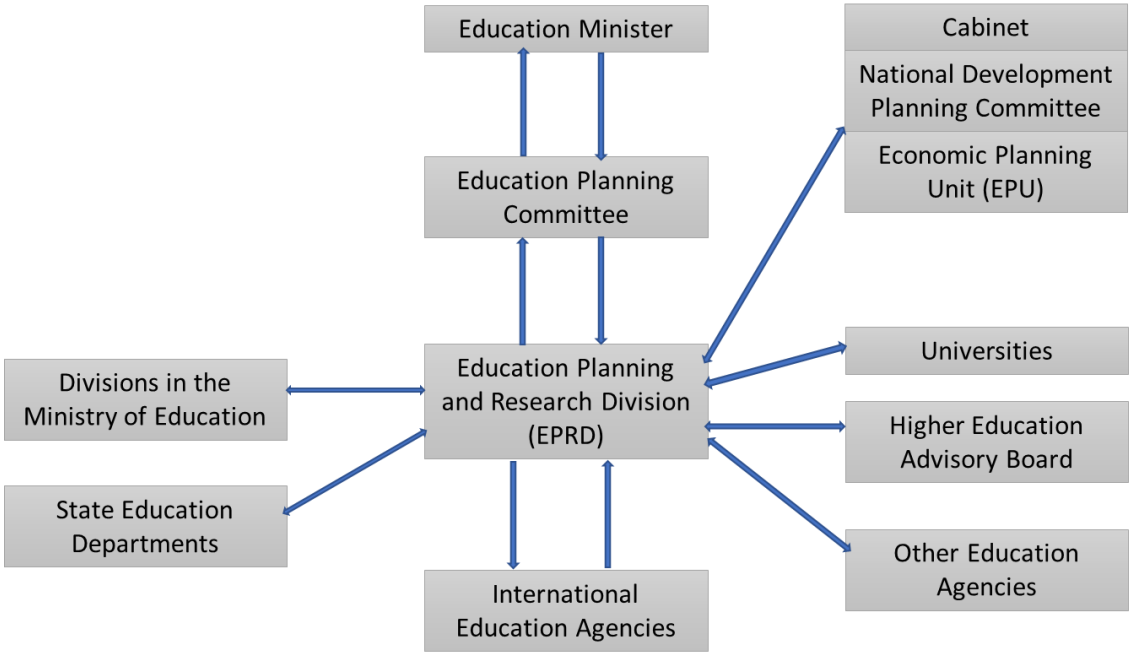


Figure 2.4: Educational policy planning at macro level (Shahril, 1999 cited in Mohd Noor, 2013: 86)

The Ministry of Education is structured within a top-down, five-tiered hierarchy which includes: national, division, state, district and school. The top management elites include the Minister of Education, two deputies of Minister of Education, a Secretary-General, a Director-General, two deputies of Secretary-General and three deputies of Director-General of Education. The State Education Offices (SEO) has the responsibility to implement national education policies and to manage all District Education Offices (DEO) and schools in the State.

Due to the administrative structure mentioned above, policy implementation in Malaysia is usually carried out in a top-down manner, whereby the concentration of power is located at the top level, and actors at the ground level have a limited role in policy development. Moreover, the actors are often excluded from the policymaking process, and has often resulted in "most educational reform implementation deviates substantially from the intended policy formulated at the central level" (Hamid, 2017: 77).

2.4 The Evolution of Educational Policy in Malaysia

As is the case with other national policies, educational policies have always been (and are) developed according to the direction of the Government and are closely associated with the national and economic development policies formulated under the Malaya and Malaysia Plan (MP). These plans refer to the medium-term (5-year) plans to guide the nation's development which began as the Malaya Plan in 1956 and was later known as the Malaysia Plan from 1966 thereafter. The 11th MP was released by the former Prime Minister on 21st May 2015, which focuses on developing the national economy with the implementation of high impact projects through the Economic Transformation Programme (ETP) and the Government Transformation Programme (GTP). Concerning education, these national and economic policies are linked out of necessity "to provide education for human resource development to meet the needs of the social, economic and political development of the country" (Ahmad, 2013: 197). The development of these MPs is shown in the following Table 2.1.

1960-70	1971-1990	1991-2000	2001-2010	2011-2020
Pre-NEP	New Economic Policy (NEP)OPP1	National Development Policy (NDP) OPP2	National Vision Policy (NVP) OPP3	New Economic Model (NEM) OPP4
First Malaysia Plan (1MP)(1966-70)	Second Malaysia Plan (2MP) (1971-75) Third Malaysia Plan (3MP) (1976-80) Fourth Malaysia Plan (4MP) (1981-85) Fifth Malaysia Plan (5MP) (1986-90)	Sixth Malaysia Plan (6MP) (1991-95) Seventh Malaysia Plan (7MP) (1996-2000)	Eighth Malaysia Plan (8MP) (2001-2005) Ninth Malaysia Plan (9MP) (2006-2010)	Tenth Malaysia Plan (10MP) (2011-2015) Eleventh Malaysia Plan (11MP) (2016-2020)
				Economic Transformation Programme (ETP) 2010-2020 Government Transformation Programme (GTP) (1st phase 2010-2012, 2nd phase 2012-2015, 3rd phase 2015-2020)

Table 2.1: The National Development Plans and Programmes (UNESCO, 2015)

Although there are many tremendous changes in the education system worth mentioning and discussing, this section will focus only on those major changes that appeared to have the most impact and relevance to the teaching profession and the policy being examined in this study. However, it is necessary to firstly look at the four major phases in the history to understand the development of education in Malaysia. Table 2.2 summarises the details of each phase.

	Phase	Duration	Details
1	Pre-Independence and Early Independence	before 1957 – 1970	• Targeted at national unity. • Centered on 4 national types of school, improve curriculum, textbooks and medium of instruction. • Recommendation of the use of *Bahasa Melayu* as the language of instruction.
2	The New Economic Policy	1971 – 1990	• Focused on developing skilled workforce and fulfilling national and social needs. • The medium of instruction was replaced from English to *Bahasa Melayu.* • Fully residential schools began to be established.
3	The National Development Policy	1991 – 2000	• The importance of the use of information and communication technology in education was emphasised
4	The National Vision Policy	2001 – 2020	• Vision 2020 was unveiled. Malaysia is anticipated to achieve the status of an industrialised and developed nation in terms of its economy, national unity, social cohesion, social justice, political stability, system of government, quality of life, social and spiritual values, national pride and confidence (Mahathir, 1991).

Table 2.2: Summary of the four major phases of the Malaysian policy development (adapted from Awang, 2014: 47-48)

In relation to these four phases, the key developments pertinent to the present study include policy changes made regarding the language of instruction used in government schools not only to promote national unity and social cohesion but also to match the demands of the global market. Educational policies were also developed to provide equal educational opportunities for all ethnicity

and to eradicate poverty as well as to fulfil the needs of becoming a knowledge-economy society. Also, educational policies were directed at preparing the citizens on how to address the growing globalisation challenges and to remain competitive. These key developments are elaborated further in the following sections.

2.4.1 Pre-independence and early independence phase

It was mentioned earlier in this chapter that during the pre-independence and early independence era, education was used as a tool to resolve ethnic, human capital and educational issues in the country (see Section 2.3.1). So, national policies during this period were aimed at promoting national unity and nation-building. In achieving this aim, a special education committee was formed to evaluate the education system, resulting in the Rahman Talib Report. This committee evaluated and supported the policies proposed by the previous education committee known as the Razak Report 1956. Importantly, these two reports were the foundation for the enactment of the Education Act in 1961. The main goal of the Rahman Talib Report is to unite the people of various ethnicities through a national education system using standardised primary and secondary school curriculum. Thus, the report suggested a unified system of education, the use of *Bahasa Malaysia* as the language of instruction and a standardised curriculum with systematic testing and evaluation. Nonetheless, teacher training after independence remained very much as previously, and the teaching methods continued to "mirror practice in the former metropolitan country", implying the continued legacy of colonialism in education which still influences aspects of the present-day policy and practice (Thomas, 2009: 122).

As a result of the implementation of the Education Act 1961, the language of instruction in all four types of vernacular schools was changed to *Bahasa Malaysia*. The Chinese vernacular schools were mostly affected by the policy which led to racial riots on 13th May 1969.

This was due to the tensions and conflicts that occurred between the Chinese and the Malays regarding Malay Supremacy in Malaya. The tragic event is significant in Malaysian politics as it brought about change in government policy that favoured the Malays[3] by the implementation of the New Economic Policy (NEP).

2.4.2 The New Economic Policy phase

The launch of the NEP in 1971 shifted the focus of education policies towards social integration and national unity by providing equal educational opportunities for all ethnicity. In other words, education was used as a mechanism to eliminate poverty and to restructure the Malaysian society so that no ethnicity is identified with a certain economic function (Hussein, 2008). The NEP also ran in tandem with the growing global education trend at that time and brought about the first wave of educational reform in Malaysia. The NEP focused on strategies to improve teaching and learning as a means to fulfil the country's need for a skilled workforce needed for the country's economic growth. To achieve this goal, another education committee known as the Cabinet Committee was formed in 1979 to review the education system further. This committee suggested several recommendations (Mok, 2012) including:

- More attention given to reading, writing and arithmetic skills;
- Stronger emphasis on moral and spiritual education;
- Emphasis on a Malaysian-oriented curriculum;
- Extend schooling from 9 to 11 years; and
- Implementation of the New Primary School Curriculum (1983) and the Integrated Secondary School Curriculum (1989).

[3] Poverty reduction strategies and policies were perceived as being oriented towards Malay farmers.

The Cabinet Committee Report 1979 also marked a clearer philosophy of education. The National Philosophy of Education (NPE) declares that:

> Education in Malaysia is an on-going effort towards further developing the potential of individuals in a holistic and integrated manner to produce individuals who are intellectually, spiritually, emotionally and physically balanced and harmonic, based on a firm belief and devotion to God. Such an effort is designed to produce Malaysian citizens who are knowledgeable and competent, who possess high moral standards and who are responsible and capable of achieving a high level of personal well-being as well as an ability to contribute to the harmony and betterment of the family, the society and the nation at large (Ministry of Education, 2012: 22).

Since this time, the development of education in Malaysia has always been guided by the NPE which serves as a platform for a new direction to develop holistic individuals who are "intellectually, spiritually, emotionally and physically balanced" and will be able to contribute to the country's well-being (Ministry of Education, 2013: A-4).

The NPE is also perceived as a complete approach to the development of education in Malaysia and in overcoming global challenges such as human capital development and becoming a knowledge-economy (Mok, 2012; Mohd Noor, 2013). Thus, all ensuing educational policies are to underpin the aspirations of this philosophy including the attempts to strengthen the quality of the teachers (Jamil et al., 2011).

2.4.3 The National Development Policy phase

During the 1990s, the third phase of education development brought about the introduction of the National Development Policy (NDP) which was implemented as part of the Sixth and the Seventh MPs (see Table 2.1). The core focus of these two MPs was on the expansion of educational opportunities, improvement of education quality and the boost in skilled and quality workforce particularly in the

field of Science and Technology (Jamil et al., 2011). In 1991, Vision 2020 was unveiled marking the turning point for Malaysia's change of direction and the beginning of the nation's modernisation, diverting its workforce from a P-economy (production-economy) to a K-economy (knowledge and skills-economy) as one of the strategies to compete with the global market (The National Brain Trust, 2002 cited in Thomas, 2009). The use of the English Language, replacing *Bahasa Malaysia* as the language of instruction for Mathematics and Science subjects in national schools further signified the necessity for Malaysia to "embrace policies and practices that would enhance hi-tech sectors, trade and the work of financial institutions in a post-modern age" (Thomas, 2009: 129).

Despite the approximately 40 years of concerted efforts to establish *Bahasa Malaysia* as the national language, the Prime Minister at that time pressed the "reverse button" which reflected the intensifying global economic competition. English Language was and is still recognised as an international lingua-franca which allows for the efficient and effective exchange of information, maximising Malaysia's national economic competitiveness within the context of globalisation, which was clearly the "decisive factor" in prompting these changes (Thomas, 2009: 127). Nevertheless, as far as this language policy– Teaching and Learning Science and Mathematics in English, also known in its Malay acronym as *Pengajaran dan Pembelajaran Sains dan Matematik dalam Bahasa Inggeris* (PPSMI) is concerned, it was not well-received by the people, especially the Malays and Chinese due to strong demands for the subjects to be taught in their mother tongues and insufficient resources for its implementation. Teacher readiness and language proficiency issues were also some of the factors contributing towards the stiff resistance shown towards the policy (Lai and Ahmad Ishak, 2012). The policy was finally abolished in 2012.

Another significant effort made by the Malaysian government within the NDP period was the introduction of Vision Schools or *Sekolah*

Wawasan to promote harmony among various ethnicities further, so that real progress could be made to address the growing globalisation challenges. The thinking behind this strategy was to bring together school communities from the three ethnic groups–Malays, Chinese and Indians and to house them on the same campus so that "proximity would be the first step in making interschool a reality" (Thomas, 2009: 133). By sharing school physical amenities such as playgrounds, eating areas and the celebrations of cultural events, it was assumed that the pupils would have more opportunities to socialise. However, there was no concrete evidence indicating such opportunities have led to improvements in inter-ethnic understanding (Malakolunthu, 2006). To date, only one out of the six Vision Schools established in 2005 is still in operation.

Up to this point, there was a pressing need for truly multi-cultural education at the school level and an increased concern for an extensive reorganisation of content and teaching methods. Likewise, a major change in the attitudes of teachers and school leaders', along with the need to improve their professional skills and pedagogical competence in various areas were among the urgent priorities set out in the NDP (Hussein, 2008). As such, succeeding national and educational policies were emphasised on establishing the framework for attitudinal change and improvement of quality amongst the teaching profession as the demands for the development of human capital into a K-economy intensified.

2.4.4 The National Vision Policy phase

Vision 2020 is seen as a policy that brought about yet another major shift in the teaching profession with more efforts apparent to equip teachers with the necessary skills and knowledge. As summarised in Table 2.1, Vision 2020 is Malaysia's ambition to achieve a fully industrialised and developed status, with its own Malaysian identity by the year 2020 (PEMANDU, 2010). The implementation of

Vision 2020 which was an add-on document to the NEP, signalled Malaysia's keen determination to compete in the global market. However, the Government believes that being economically competitive globally is insufficient for the country to develop fully; social cohesion and human capital quality were also seen as a critical prerequisite to becoming a fully developed nation by 2020. Thus, Malaysians are expected to overcome the nine challenges outlined in the policy by:

1. Establishing a united Malaysian nation with a sense of common and shared destiny;
2. Creating a psychologically liberated, secure, and developed Malaysian society;
3. Fostering a democratic society;
4. Establishing a fully moral and ethical society;
5. Establishing a mature liberal and tolerant society;
6. Establishing a scientific and progressive society;
7. Establishing a fully caring society and a caring culture; ensuring an economically just society; and
8. Establishing a prosperous society

(Mahathir, 1991: 2-4).

In response to the goals set out in the Vision 2020, the Education Development Master Plan 2006-2010 (EDMP) was established. This education blueprint highlighted the Government's aspirations to ensure a high quality and relevant national education system by employing more focused strategic plans and actions. Among others, the EDMP was expected to close the education gap, establish education clusters, strengthen national schools and improve the quality of teaching. The EDMP set out six strategic thrusts:

1. Nation-building;
2. Developing human capital;

3. Strengthening national schools;
4. Bridging the education gap;
5. Enhancing the teaching profession; and
6. Accelerating excellence of educational institutions

(Ministry of Education, 2008: 19-23).

Interestingly, nation-building and human capital are overarching national development strategies to which education can contribute while the others are about strengthening education quality. Even though all the strategies are of importance, of particular relevance to the present study is thrust 2–developing human capital, which is closely related to the role of teachers and thrust 4–enhancing the teaching profession. Discussion of these strategies is significant to illustrate the development of the Governments' effort in upgrading the teaching profession into a prestigious and respectful career in Malaysia (Jamil, 2014) and as a means to develop positive student learning outcomes which eventually is the ultimate goal of improving the quality of the Malaysian workforce. As was pronounced in the EDMP (2006–2010: 106):

> The Ministry of Education's policy is to elevate the teaching profession by increasing the quality of teachers, advancing teaching as a career and improving the welfare of teachers. The Ministry of Education's goal is to make the teaching profession one that is respected and highly regarded in accordance with the trust given to the teachers to carry out their roles in nation-building.

The EDMP implied that to achieve quality education, the role of teachers is extremely crucial, and the policy strategies of improving teacher professionalism not only include programmes to enhance the quality of teaching and teachers' commitment to the teaching profession but also in enhancing their working environment and professional status. Educational policies since then have also begun

emphasising on ongoing teacher professional development which is believed to be crucial in improving teacher quality and student learning. For example, Teacher Training Colleges (TTC) have been converted into the Institutes of Teacher Education (ITE) in order to upgrade the status of teachers. Also, teacher education curriculum was revised to suit the needs of the profession at that time (Jamil, 2014). The Teacher Education Division (TED) later introduced the *Standard Guru Malaysia* (SGM) or the Malaysia Teacher Standard in 2009 as a benchmark of professional standards for all teachers. The Ministry also encouraged teachers to continue their education by offering monetary and non-monetary rewards (ibid). These efforts were continuously carried out and became more intensified with the establishment of the GTP in 2010, which also marked the beginning of the development of the most recent education reform–the Blueprint.

The GTP, which was introduced by the former Prime Minister was driven by the ETP which is an economic policy. The main goals of the GTP were to improve the Government's efficiency in its delivery of services and to quickly move Malaysia closer to become a developed and high-income nation as anticipated by Vision 2020 (PEMANDU, 2010). Thus, to accelerate the achievement of these goals, the strategies under the GTP in particular, were designed to deliver significant and immediate results in the areas prioritised by the Government. These areas are focused into six National Key Result Areas (NKRAs) as outlined below (ibid):

1. Reducing crime;
2. Fighting corruption;
3. Improving student outcomes;
4. Raising the living standards of low-income households;
5. Improving basic rural infrastructure; and
6. Improving urban public transport.

Among these six priorities, of close relation to the present study is the third–improving student outcomes which aims to provide quality education for all young Malaysians in enabling them to compete globally. Education reform is seen as one of the most prominent strategies of the GTP for achieving this goal, and the Government is keen to provide quality education and to improve the quality of teaching (ibid). Further, the decision to improve teaching quality could be attributed to the fundamental role of teachers in developing skilled human capital, which is seen as crucial in realising the goals of Vision 2020. In this respect, the PPPB policy has an indirect influence on the outcome of the GTP. In effect, the Ministry views the formulation of the PPPB policy as a catalyst for improving teaching in particular, and student learning outcomes more generally.

2.4.5 The Malaysia Education Blueprint (2013-2025)

The more recent development of education in Malaysia arises from the Tenth MP which also encompasses the objectives of the New Economic Model (NEM) and the GTP (see Table 2.1). The Tenth MP is underpinned by the intention to reform and strengthen the system of education by adopting a new focus on the improvement of human capital (Economic Planning Unit, 2010). The Malaysian Government appeared to be showing greater commitment towards education as part of the national agenda. This is indicated in the dedication of an entire chapter on education in the Tenth MP (Economic Planning Unit, 2010: Chapter 5). Through this MP, the Government aspires to produce a first world talent-based workforce as part of the ambition of becoming an advanced and developed nation by 2020. Also, it is within this MP that Malaysia has benchmarked the education system in industrialised countries like Singapore, Finland, Australia and South Korea. The reasons for benchmarking these countries were mainly because their systems have been recognised internationally in international student tests. Notwithstanding, Malaysia is dedicated to developing its national

education at the same level as these countries so that the country stands equal with other big economy players like Japan, China, and the United States.

In September 2013, driven by the objectives of the Tenth MP, the Blueprint was established. Initially, as an effort towards developing the Blueprint, in 2011, the Ministry commenced a thorough review of the Malaysian education system assisted by various international and local education specialists including the World Bank, the OECD, UNESCO and local universities (Ministry of Education, 2013). Inputs were also drawn from principals, teachers, parents and students from all over the country. Based on the preliminary report of the Blueprint; quality teachers are mandatory if Malaysia wants to be acknowledged as a developed nation by 2020 (Ministry of Education, 2012). Despite the difficulties to achieve this goal, Malaysia has set itself bold ambitions to be accomplished by 2025 in its quest of becoming one of the top third high-performing countries concerning education standards and benchmarks to ensure its competitiveness against other developed countries. Such a strategy also seems fundamental if Malaysia is to benefit from the shift of economic power from the West to Asia (Economic Planning Unit, 2010).

The Blueprint focuses on eleven main 'Shifts' or changes to be fulfilled in three 'Waves' or phases (see Section 1.2.2). The First Wave (2013–2015) focuses on raising the quality of teachers and teaching and improving student learning. The Second Wave (2016–2020) concentrates on improving the efficiency of the education delivery system, and the Third Wave (2021–2025) is directed towards "increasing operational flexibility to cultivate a peer-led culture of professional excellence" (Ministry of Education, 2013: E-25). Based on these three waves, the transformation of the teaching profession is one of the core changes defined in the Blueprint, and this is noted under Shift Four–Transform 'Teaching into a Profession of Choice' (ibid). It is also evident in the Blueprint that the Ministry appears to strongly

believe that teacher quality is a fundamental aspect of improving the quality of education (Ministry of Education, 2013: E-14):

> International research shows that teacher quality is the most significant school-based factor in determining student outcomes. The quality of a system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers. While there are certainly many excellent teachers in the Malaysian education system, a 2011 research study by AKEPT found that only 50 percent of lessons are being delivered effectively. This means that the lessons did not sufficiently engage students, and followed a more passive, lecture format of content delivery. These lessons focused on achieving surface-level content understanding, instead of higher-order thinking skills. This statistic is particularly challenging as an estimated 60 percent of today's teachers will still be teaching in 20 years' time.

Also, this statement not only indicates that the Ministry tends to rely on recommendations made in international education reports about the importance of teacher quality, but it also tends to make a comparison with other systems. References were also made based on the findings of the local research, however, regional or district level disparities were not acknowledged in the Blueprint. Intriguingly, what is apparent here is that the issue of teacher quality is not only a local issue but is also a globalised education policy discourse which I will elaborate further in the following chapter.

Paying close attention to teachers, "teaching will be a prestigious, elite profession that only recruits from the top 30 % of graduates in the country" (Ministry of Education, 2013: E-14). The Ministry assumed that with the availability of high-quality graduates; high-quality teacher education and training; career progression opportunities based on competency and performance as well as a new professional learning culture will promote changes in the teaching workforce (ibid). The Ministry also proposed to offer enhanced or better teacher learning opportunities, ongoing from the beginning of their career to the point of retirement (ibid).

Other than improved and better professional development opportunities and learning, the Ministry promised that teachers would be offered support "so that they can focus the majority of their time on their core function of teaching" (ibid).

> This will be achieved by streamlining and simplifying existing data collection and management processes. Some administrative functions will also be moved to a centralised service centre or a dedicated administrative teacher at the school level (Ministry of Education, 2013: E-26).

In future, the Ministry expects teachers to only undertake minimum clerical or administrative work, unlike what is demanded of them presently. The logic underpinning these changes is that teachers would have more time to focus on teaching and learning in the classroom and to engage more in self-regulated professional learning.

Additionally, to improve the quality of teachers, they would be assessed annually using a new evaluation instrument–the Unified Instrument (UI) which evaluates explicitly teachers' instructional ability. This new evaluation tool is assumed to be able to reflect the capability of teachers' in facilitating student learning. For instance, high-performing teachers as indicated by the UI will enjoy 'fast-track' career progression. Nevertheless, although the UI is expected to help improve teacher quality, it also seems to be a means for the Ministry to exercise on another form of control and accountability to teachers as teachers are expected to provide evidence of their achievements as part of the evaluation process (Ministry of Education, 2016).

In summary, the development of educational policies in Malaysia has undergone four major phases which have served different purposes following the direction of the Government. Throughout history, the Government has and still uses education as a political tool to unite the people of various ethnicities and as a strategy to produce skilled human capital so that the country remains competitive in the global economy.

The manner in which policy is developed and implemented is very much centralised and top-down due to the concentration of power by the central government. Since most national policies are developed at the central level, the content of policies sometimes tends to overlap and intertwine with and guided by various other policies. Sadly, the voice of the public is often limited or non-existent in this process. Similar orientation occurs in educational policy planning as every national education policy needs to go through the EPRD as the secretariat and the Education Planning Committee must approve each policy before implementation (see Figure 2.4) indicating a highly centralised and top-down education structure and system.

The policies addressed in this section particularly, the EDMP and the Blueprint, concentrated on the goal of improving the education system in Malaysia by concentrating on teacher and teaching quality as the catalyst for student learning. Also, these policies are framed under the assumption that teachers of higher quality and quality teaching as defined by the UI, correlate with the production of better human capital through improved student learning outcomes, which in turn will benefit the country's economic development and ultimately lead to the realisation of Vision 2020–high-income developed nation. In reality, this is the assumption embedded into the present education policies in Malaysia in which it also underpins the PPPB policy as one of the key strategies of the general education reform agenda, and the wide-ranging approach to reshaping the professionalism of Malaysian teachers.

2.5 Teachers as Part of the Public Service in Malaysia

As noted earlier, teachers are the leading population of civil servants in the Malaysian public service. Table 2.3 is an illustration of the comparison of the number of teachers and other professionals in the public service. For example, the number of teachers in 2007 was 205, 578 as compared to the total number of personnel in three

ministries (Ministry of Health, Ministry of Defence and Ministry of Home Affairs) which was only 47, 418. To date, there are 239,850 primary school teachers and 181,978 secondary school teachers, rounding it to a total of 421,828 teachers working under the Ministry (see Table 2.4 below). These vast teacher numbers indicate that the management of the teaching profession is complex.

No	MINISTRIES	ESTABLSHMENT							
		TOP MANAGEMENT		MANAGEMENT& PROFESSIONAL		SUPPORTING		TOTAL	
		2007	2008	2007	2008	2007	2008	2007	2008
11	Ministry Of Education	49	48	205,578	239,034	263,792	265,472	469,419	504,554*
1	Ministry of Health	303	302	29,972	36,507	147,518	158,572	177,793	195,381
2	Ministry of Defence	49	47	11,798	11,702	158,507	158,479	170,354	170,228
3	Ministry of Home Affairs	41	39	5,648	5,648	131,647	131,644	137,336	137,331
	TOTAL	393	388	47,418	53,857	437,672	448,695	498,080	502,940

Source: MOE, data as 2008: Comparison establishment of posts between Ministries

*Including teachers and non-teachers

Table 2.3: Comparison of the number of personnel in different ministries in Malaysia (Awang, 2014: 255)

Level	Enrolment	No. of Students	No. of Schools	No. of Teachers
Primary	Preschool	200,684	7772	239,850
	Primary	2,685,403		
Secondary	Secondary	2,188,525	2408	181,978
Total		5,074,612	10180	421,828

Table 2.4: Statistics of schools, teachers and students (Ministry of Education, 2018)

In the present study, it is abundantly important to contextualise the position of teachers regarding the national population and demographics to provide the readers with an overview of the status of teachers in the Malaysian civil service. Due to the massive number of teachers, teachers' salaries contribute to a large share of the education budget allocated by the Government which also implies the amount of budget required for teacher professional development.

Other than budgetary constraints, the number of teachers also indicates the challenges faced by the Ministry to continuously ensure that all teachers engage in personalised professional development activities. Before the introduction of the current educational reform, teachers had been attending professional development activities, planned and fully funded by the Ministry. However, within the present reform agenda, professional development for teachers now typically occurs at the school level, and teachers are encouraged to be responsible for their own learning, including paying for their own CPD engagement. The Ministry stipulated in the Blueprint that by the time the reform reaches the Third Wave (2021–2025), Ministry-led professional development will reduce, and teacher self-initiated learning will increase by 60 percent as compared to 16 percent in the First Wave (Ministry of Education, 2013).

2.6 Teacher Professional Development within the Malaysian Education System

Teacher professional development in Malaysia refers to both pre-service and in-service education. According to the Ministry of Education (2013: 5-3):

> Pre-Service training gives teachers a solid foundation towards making effective contributions in the classroom from day one. The ongoing professional development allows teachers to maintain and enhance their skill set, including staying up-to-date with the latest developments in pedagogy.

The Ministry fully funds pre-service education for new teachers working in public schools and provided by the ITEs of the Ministry (training of primary school teachers) and local public universities (training of secondary school teachers). As the student teachers received sponsorship from the Ministry, the autonomy to decide the curriculum for initial teacher education is subjected to approval by the Ministry. In general, pre-service teacher education courses include degree and diploma certification. Student teachers typically attend a four-year full-time degree course and a diploma in education course is also offered to graduates from other disciplines (Mokhsein et al., 2009). Previously, twinning degree programmes with higher education institutions locally and abroad were also available. However, the programmes were discontinued due to financial constraints on the part of the Government. The curriculum for teachers consists of two subject areas; subject-specific content and education related courses including teaching practicum. All teacher trainees are required to learn the English language. Other than the English language and other basic skills, trainees must also take Ethnic Relations and Islamic and Asian Civilisations subjects. Overall, it is necessary for all trainees to master elements of innovation and critical thinking skills which are part of the teacher education curriculum (ibid).

New teachers used to be offered and guaranteed employment in the public service after completion of a training programme resulting in teaching being an attractive profession for young graduates. This placement, however, is based on their academic qualifications and the results of the interviews conducted by the Education Service Commission. Although, at present, the scenario has changed. Due to the Ministry's effort to maintain higher standards of graduates, beginning in 2007, only sponsored candidates who obtained excellent academic achievements will be hired by the Ministry. Those with lower academic performance must go through a qualifying examination and another interview before being considered for employment (ibid).

Then, as a continuation of their professional development, newly qualified teachers are required to undergo an induction programme known as Program Pembangunan Guru Baharu (PPGB) for one year. Under this programme, new teachers are mentored by a senior teacher on all aspects related to teaching and learning, management of school programmes, co-curriculum activities and matters related to classroom management. In other words, the PPGB is a medium to prepare and expose new teachers to the reality of their work and profession.

Before the introduction of the PPPB policy, improving teacher quality has always been part of the agenda to enhance the quality of education requiring all teachers in Malaysia to engage with ongoing professional development. It is mandated in the *Dasar Latihan Sumber Manusia Sektor Awam* or Human Resource Training Policy for The Public Sector that all civil servants including teachers must participate in professional development throughout their career (Public Service Department, 2005). It is important to note at this juncture, that being a part of the civil service, teachers are confined within the ethics and regulations just like other civil servants which requires them to fulfil the mandated requirement of seven days professional development per year. One day of professional development is equal to 6 hours, and teachers are accorded the freedom to attend any form of professional learning as long as they fulfil the seven days requirement.

Professional development for in-service teachers has always been regulated in a top-down fashion. The TED which comes under the Ministry is responsible for the planning and regulating professional development for both primary and secondary school teachers. The SEO and DEO usually assist the TED, indirectly delivering training to teachers through Teacher Activity Centres (TAC) and Resource Centres (RC) in the districts across the country (Mior Shaharudin, 2009). Through centralised funding and planning for teacher training and development, Malaysian teachers had the opportunities to participate in funded training from the beginning to the end of their service.

Professional development typically involves the introduction to new curriculum or policy, updates on pedagogical methods and classroom or school management (Jamil et al., 2011). Most CPD programmes before the implementation of the PPPB policy were targeted at improving teachers' status and teaching quality through various professional development strategies. To this end, teachers were provided with various channels to upgrade their qualifications (see Table 2.5).

CPD Strategy	Description
Upgrade teachers' entry qualification	A one-year Special Diploma in Teaching Programme offered to non-graduate teachers to upgrade their academic qualification; upon completion, there is a raise in salary.
Improve teachers' existing qualifications	Short in-service courses, master's degree courses and doctoral courses offered under the Staff Development Scheme. Some teachers were trained as key trainers, who then in turn conduct staff-development programmes in the districts.
Extend teachers' career pathway	The existing staff who have basic degrees and qualify in the age category are encouraged to apply for scholarships for a master's degree or PhD either locally or abroad. The TED also works collaboratively with local and foreign universities towards upgrading the teacher trainers.
Encourage research and development programmes	Teachers are encouraged to take an active part in research and development in field of pedagogy, management and evaluation.
Curriculum support programmes	This program is essential for effective implementation of the curriculum. Mastery of varied strategies in curriculum delivery and access to teaching-learning resources for teacher educators is made available.
Management courses for school leaders	The courses aim to upgrade administrators and school heads' management and leadership skills. Excellent schools and heads are provided with incentives to stimulate their excellence and creativity.
Inspection of educational institutions	Schools Inspectorate ensures quality curriculum is planned and implemented in schools.

CPD Strategy	Description
Publicising the achievement of teachers	National newspapers in the country have a separate weekly column which focuses on schools or educational institutions' achievements or initiatives as a way to promote excellence in education and contributes as a catalyst to upgrade teachers' professional esteem and self-worth.
The Smart Teacher Training Course	The focus is on enriching teachers in pedagogical instruction particularly using technology as an enabler in teaching. The courses have been revised in line with the frequent changes and development in ICT.
14 Weeks of Professional Development	This programme covers a wide range of knowledge and skills on computer hardware, software, networking, multimedia, internet and integration of ICT in teaching and learning. It also ensures that the teachers can handle computer labs and ICT-equipped classrooms.
A one-year Specialist Training Certificate	This programme is a full-time in-service programme that emphasises academic content in ICT, offered to primary school teachers with a minimum of three years teaching experience.

Table 2.5: Strategies employed by the TED to improve teachers' status and teaching quality (adapted from Jamil et al., 2011: p. 91 - 93)

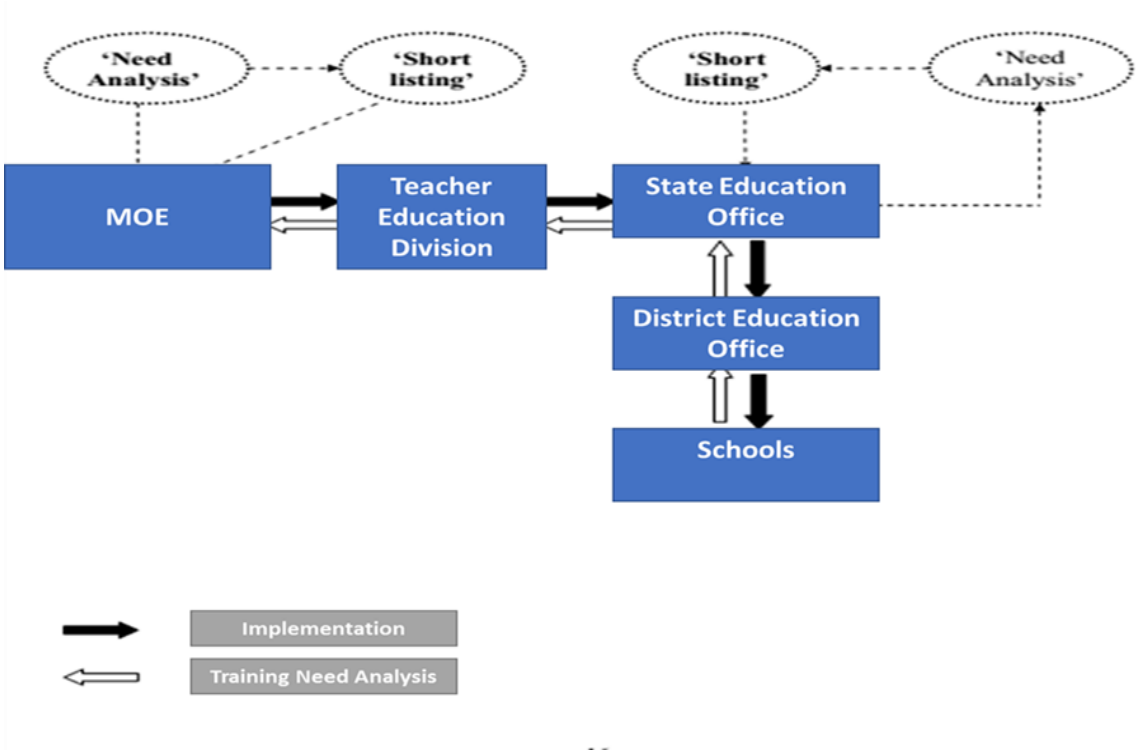


Figure 2.5: Guidelines for the operationalisation of in-service training (translated from: Ministry of Education, 2009a: 16)

Professional development programmes or activities organised by the Ministry or school are often implemented using a centralised, top-down approach as illustrated in the flowchart in Figure 2.5. The programmes are planned and designed at the central level, beginning with a needs analysis, which is conducted nationwide using a Two-tier Cluster random sampling method, carried out (according to zones) by the 16 SEOs, where the Ministry identifies the areas of training most needed by the teachers (Ministry of Education, 2009a). The programmes are then planned and designed based on these needs. The next step is identifying or 'shortlisting' the teachers who are eligible to attend the programmes which are undertaken in a top-down manner from the Ministry to the TED, then, down to the SEOs and DEOs before letters of invitation to teachers are sent to the schools. This means that often, one single programme of CPD is conducted across Malaysia's different regions. Likewise, the process of monitoring and the evaluation of professional development activities and teachers'

participation are managed using a similar approach as the training needs analysis. All stakeholders including the TED, SEOs, DEOs and schools are responsible for continuously monitoring the implementation of in-service training programmes. Based on the *Garis Panduan Pengoperasian Latihan dalam Perkhidmatan 2009* (Guidelines for the Operationalisation of In-service Training 2009), monitoring is understood as a system to document information related to the implementation of all professional development activities; analyse raw data collected during training; evaluate the effectiveness of the programmes and report information obtained from the programmes to relevant stakeholders (see Figure 2.6 below).

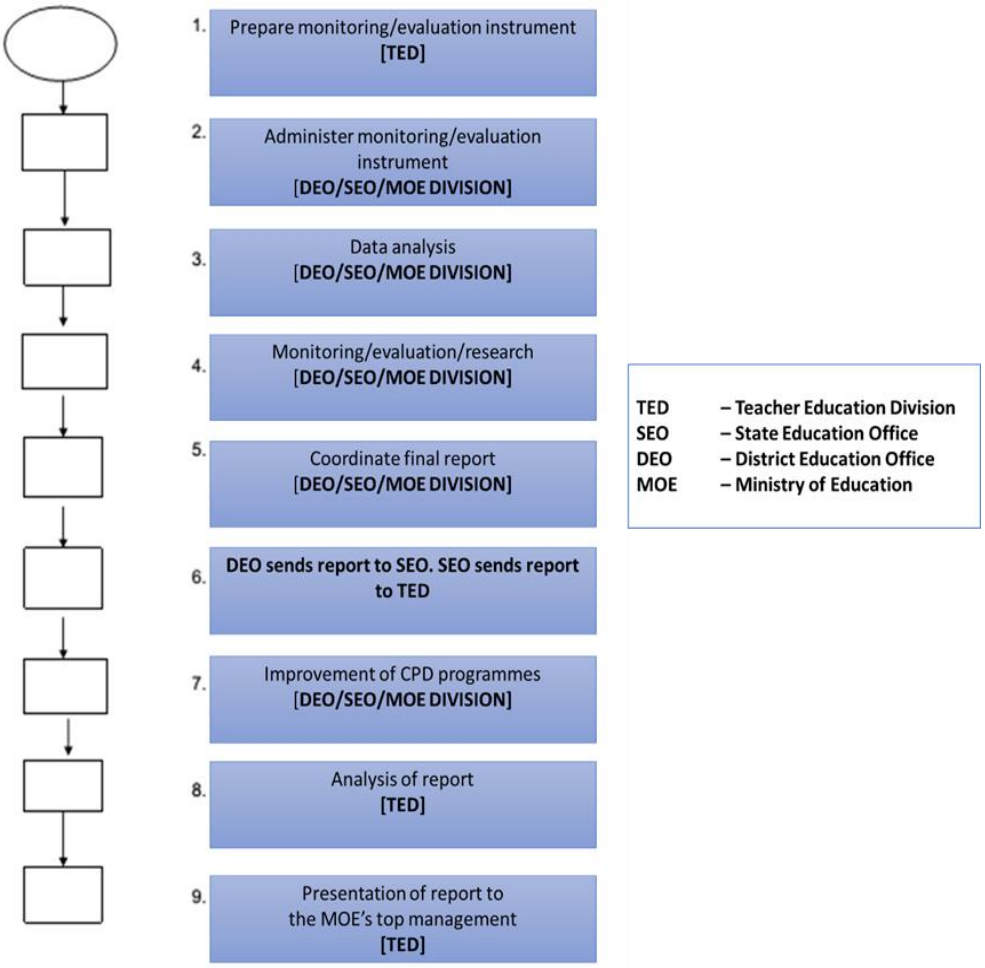


Figure 2.6: In-service training programme monitoring and evaluation process (translated from Ministry of Education, 2009a: 18)

The monitoring system ensures the programmes are carried out according to the plan; identifies issues that arose during implementation and rectify any shortcomings immediately during training to avoid future problems. Regarding the evaluation of CPD programmes, the Ministry defines it as a systematic process of collecting, analysing and interpreting data to decide upon the effectiveness of the programmes. Program evaluation is conducted towards the end of each programme by the people who organised and implemented the program. The monitoring and evaluation report of the programmes are then sent through the DEOs and SEOs to the TED who is responsible for presenting the final report to the central decision-makers in the Ministry. The rationale for this process is that before the PPPB policy was introduced, almost all Ministry-led professional development was fully funded by the Ministry. To this point, the Ministry claims that evaluation reports will help the decision-makers to determine whether a programme should be continued or dismissed (Ministry of Education, 2009a). Nonetheless, this exercise is thus, arguable because the decision-makers at the top are not fully aware of what indeed occurs on the ground, yet, are accorded with the responsibility to decide whether a professional development programme is worthy or not for the teachers based on the reports produced by the middle managers. Such a system could work in a small homogeneous education system but is not well suited to a large country with diverse educational contexts and a diverse population like Malaysia.

Furthermore, despite the Ministry's persistent emphasis on teacher professional development, Abdul Kader (2008) found that teacher professional development in Malaysia is usually mandated in which courses are designed by education 'experts' from the Ministry or the SEOs. Mior Shaharudin (2009) supports that, at times, teachers perceived training as non-productive or without added-value because it is not developed based on teachers' needs. Furthermore, a 'one-size-

fits-all' approach is often the method of delivery; regardless of teachers' background, the same content is taught to all participants (Leng, 2007). Kabilan and Veratharaju (2013: 335) call this 'a very much cascade type of programme' because the Ministry "still dictates and organises" professional development courses. They also report that Malaysian teachers complained about professional development activities that do not address their needs (ibid). This centralised and top-down approach seems to result in teachers and schools being dependent on the Ministry for professional development opportunities.

In addition, based on the flow chart shown in Figure 2.6, teachers are not included in the 'shortlisting' stage. The content of the programmes is usually decided by the TED, SEO and DEO, whereas, teachers are merely the receiver of whatever has been decided for them. Although annually teachers were required to come out with a list of the kind of training they need, in the end, they would have to accept what the Ministry has decided for them. More often than not, teachers in different stages of their career would do the same CPD at the same time. Thus, it is arguable that teachers should be a part of the planning process so that they can be selective of the kind of professional development that would benefit them the most. It was found that the concentration of authority at the Ministry has a particularly strong influence on sector performance (UNESCO, 2013). In other words, centralised control and insufficient implementation capacity contribute to teachers' lacking in the opportunities for valuable professional development. All these reasons imply the need for a transformation in the ways teachers engage with professional development to improve the quality of teachers and teaching as aspired by the current educational reform in Malaysia.

With the implementation of the PPPB policy, the Ministry hopes to move away from being the sole CPD provider. The Ministry aspires to increase the percentage of collaborative school-based CPD from 16 % to 60 % by 2025 (Ministry of Education, 2013). CPD activities

are now seen as programmes that give teachers the learning experience either done individually or collectively to add value to their professionalism. Teachers are exposed to more variety of CPD opportunities and activities as compared to before the introduction of the PPPB policy. CPD has often been carried out as a one-off activity and ad-hoc with little follow-up in the classroom. It is often conducted in the form of workshops, talks and seminars. The PPPB policy, provides teachers with more opportunities to participate in research, coaching and mentoring, benchmarking visit, Professional Learning Communities (PLC), access to e-Guru (e-Teacher) video library and writing and publication (Ministry of Education, 2014). These CPD activities are believed to be more effective in improving teachers' knowledge and skills. For example, research has shown that PLC seems to inspire teachers to change their classroom practices because they can collaborate with other teachers, have the opportunities to share and reflect their learning and are exposed to hands on experience of everyday reality of classroom activities (Darling-Hammond and Richardson, 2009). Hence, through the implementation of the PPPB policy, the Ministry offers teachers with information on various CPD opportunities, the purpose of doing CPD and the benefits of participating in CPD activities not only for their career progression, but also their lifelong learning. The Ministry also assumes that successful implementation of the PPPB policy depends on a change of paradigm and increased awareness among teachers that CPD is critical to student success.

2.7 Personal Context: The PPPB Policy and Me

My interest in the teacher professional development policy and practice has significantly influenced my professional life and the present research. Firstly, my position as a former teacher provided me with the understanding of the actual realities regarding the work of teachers'. Secondly, as a policymaker in the Ministry, I had been

directly involved in formulating and developing the policy. Finally, being a doctoral researcher, my keen interest in the area of teacher professionalism resulted from my previous experience as a ministry official responsible for the management of teacher professional development.

2.7.1 Former teacher

When I worked as a secondary school teacher, I was fully involved with teaching. I tried my level best to teach students by constantly upgrading my pedagogical skills to match the needs of my students. As a teacher, I believed that I could make a difference in the lives of students. Undeniably, throughout the nine years of teaching, I encountered many instances of educational policy and curriculum change. There were times when I felt that the policies introduced by the Ministry seemed inappropriate, implemented only halfway and changed whenever the Government changed its political course. During these times, the continuous changes made me feel under-valued, and at times I felt like giving up on teaching. The growing accountability measures introduced in educational reforms also seemed to make no consideration of the distinct learning needs of students.

The continuous efforts by the Government to impose multiple changes simultaneously, also impacted how I viewed the teaching profession during this time. The amount of administrative work intensified with the introduction of new innovations, demanding teachers to spend less time preparing lessons which resulted in my declining concentration on teaching. More time was spent collecting fees and completing various forms related to examinations and students' personal information in both paper and digital formats. At times, teachers were required to produce documentation or reports on the efforts made regarding student learning, and they were evaluated based on how well the students performed in tests. Besides, being demanded to participate in mandated professional development

activities which often did not relate to my interest or work, further added to my indifferent attitude towards the teaching profession. It is, thus, unsurprising to witness why the increase in teacher workload and the demands for performativity and accountability contributed to the low motivation of teachers', not only in teaching but also in the effort to improve themselves for the sake of student learning.

Knowing and understanding the actual realities of being a teacher made it a stronger case for me to examine the influences affecting policy implementation at the school level and the sense of teacher professionalism. By conducting this research, I hoped to gain a better insight into teachers' perceptions of the policy implementation process and how they felt as professionals and whether their professional development experiences had any impact on this. However, this positionality also places me in a position where I could be biased about the views of teachers. At the outset of the research process, I came with a particular purpose and a set of ideas due to my role as a former teacher, believing that I am on the teachers' side because I have been through what they are currently experiencing. There was the potential here to impose my values and beliefs on the claims being made by directing teachers towards the topic and what I anticipated from this research onto the participants.

2.7.2 Policymaker background

After completing a master's degree in the field of Comparative Education, I opted out of classroom teaching and took up a position at the TED. It is here that I have had the opportunities to engage in the process of planning teacher professional development. Through four years of working with TED, I soon realised that professional development in many ways is not only about keeping teachers up-to-date with the latest developments in education but is also, to enable them to teach students according to their needs and abilities. Accordingly, teachers should be continually provided with the

appropriate support in improving their knowledge, skills and competencies to the best of their potential. To achieve this, teachers should be given the freedom and autonomy to identify and decide on the kind of professional learning they believe best suit their working contexts.

Observations of contemporary educational policies related to teacher professionalism have provided some indication that professional development activities are centrally determined and directed towards national agendas rather than on teachers' professional needs; despite the Government's expressed ambition to improve both teachers and teaching quality. Teachers, in contrast, appear to believe that the Ministry has insufficient implementation capacity and that they are not doing enough to support teachers in their professional growth. As a consequence, teachers lack an understanding of the nature of reform. Also, there seems to be a gap in the formulation of policy and its implementation. At this point, I agree with UNESCO (2013) that the concentration of authority at the Ministry has a particularly strong influence on sector performance. In other words, due to the Ministry's responsibility to consider the needs of the central Government, educational policies are often prioritised to meet and conciliate these competing demands which resulted in teachers' interests being overlooked or ignored. In this regard, much is required to be undertaken in the ways policies are formulated and how they are implemented. Indeed, this is what I have experienced working at the Ministry which led to the decision to investigate teacher professionalism regarding the policy and its practice, particularly the PPPB policy within the context of the Malaysian education system.

Furthermore, in discussing the aspect of positionality in this research, it should be noted that it was inevitable for me to avoid relating it to my experiences, background, contexts, beliefs and values. The main concern regarding the dilemma of positionality is whether my background as a policymaker would facilitate or limit the topic of this

study. My position as a policymaker made it less complicated when engaging and dealing with senior policymakers and top management in the Ministry. However, my interest is to view the issue of teacher professional development policy and practice beyond that of the formulation of the PPPB policy. Put another way, being a policymaker myself; I am aware that policy formulation and implementation are two separate processes and policymakers at the Federal level more often than not, tend to neglect implementation issues. Also, since I went to further my studies before the PPPB policy implementation process began, I was concerned and curious about the extent of how the policy has been implemented. In this study, I concentrated on building analytical, critical and rational arguments regarding the influences shaping teacher professionalism and issues on teacher and teaching quality. In this vein, I tried to be reflexive on the arguments made throughout the research process and took the extra precaution of the possibility of my own positioning influencing both the collection and analysis of data.

2.7.3 Researcher positionality

Before pursuing my doctoral degree, I worked as an education officer and was closely involved in developing the PPPB policy document. Due to the highly-centralised system, the policy was designed and implemented in a top-down manner which did not offer teachers the opportunity or authority to make any decisions regarding their own professional growth. The policy was released at the end of 2014, only a few months after I started my PhD journey. I have chosen to examine the PPPB policy because I am keen to know how it has been implemented as mentioned and how teachers perceive and receive it. Much of the literature review and the methodological design selected for this study illuminate the specific themes emerging from the implementation of the policy from the teachers' viewpoints. In relation to this, Carr (1995: 89) notes that educational researchers have

recognised that values could affect their work conduct and often, "…values influence their choice of research problems and their views about the practical uses their research should serve." On this note, this research is inevitably influenced by my beliefs and values. Therefore, I need to be explicit about these and hold them up for critical scrutiny. As a doctoral researcher, it is a necessity for me to be inclined to the culture of academe which motivated me to conduct this research using the social science approach when exploring issues regarding teacher professional development policy and practice. As mentioned in the above paragraph, what attracts me undertaking this study is my experience as an education official and policymaker at the Ministry. The chosen area of this study was derived from my background and experiences not only as a former teacher and as a policymaker but also as a researcher who is, directly and indirectly, related to the focus of the research.

My initial concern when I decided to pursue research in education policy related to teacher professionalism was that the Ministry provided insufficient attention and support to the learning needs of teachers and that relevant policies were not implemented as intended by the policymakers. Given that the broadest goals of the PPPB policy were to change the way teachers engage with professional learning and transform teaching into the profession of choice, as stated in the Blueprint, efforts made by the Ministry are seen less likely to be parallel to these goals.

My personal experiences and observation at the Ministry suggested that qualitative studies on the relationship between policy and practice especially the ones related to teacher professional development are limited and most research in this area is often conducted using quantitative approaches. The dominance of quantitative approaches in educational research is synonymous with 'statistical', and the dominant view of the Ministry is because results or findings with numbers and rankings provide fast results and are

supported with reasonably ‘straightforward’ evidence; whereas qualitative inquiry is time-consuming and involves interpretations of multiple realities and contexts. This idea raises some questions that motivate me to focus on the development of education policies related to professional development and their professionalism from the teachers’ standpoint.

My interest was developed when I gathered information concerning teacher professionalism as part of the policymaking process. As I went through the literature, I realised that the issue of policy formulation and implementation is not a local problem but a global education discourse. Further, I wanted to identify the factors that led to much of the teachers' indifference and resistance towards education policies as it has always been the case whenever the Ministry introduced new policies into the system. I believed that there was a missing ‘link' that connects the policymakers at the top level and teachers as implementers at the bottom level. The Ministry appears to be the weakest link in respect of aligning the policy intention with the strategies used to implement it. Findings on this missing ‘link' might feed re-iteratively into the re-articulation of this particular policy and other educational policies as a whole.

Nevertheless, as also noted later in the methodology chapter, there was a need to consider my positionality in this research study. Even though I am now a doctoral researcher and no longer an education officer working for the Ministry, I am still restricted by contractual agreements as a civil servant; I must not expose the workings of Government and pledge to honour the good name of the Government. These matters created tensions and dilemma during the data collection process particularly in the issue of transcription of the research interviews with senior policymakers which I elaborate in more detail in the methodology chapter.

2.8 Conclusion

This chapter offered a summary of the history of Malaysian education along with the national and economic policy contexts which are closely related to the formulation of the PPPB policy. Underpinning the development of policies in the Malaysian education system has been the Government's continuous focus on strengthening social cohesion, economic development and nation-building. This focus also includes the need to improve the quality of both teachers and teaching which eventually will contribute to better student learning outcome.

The chapter has revealed that having a centralised system, education policies in Malaysia are made at the national level and involved multifaceted processes before they are implemented at various levels. The delegation and re-articulation of these policies, therefore, presents significant challenges for teachers who are at the bottom of the policy chain, especially during the implementation stages. This means that policy implementation at the school level is dependent upon how the policies have been translated and interpreted by the school leaders before the delivery of information to teachers. Accordingly, this research aims to make sense of these relationships and the issues raised during the formulation and implementation process of educational policies. Furthermore, this study aims to understand how policies are developed and implemented as part of the reform strategies to improve both teachers' and teaching quality through innovations in teacher learning.

Overall, this chapter is essential because without initially understanding the context in which a problem exists, one cannot understand or solve the problem effectively. On the one hand, setting out the background of the Malaysian education system provides the readers with an overview of the context of how educational policies are developed and implemented and to offer a greater understanding of the rationale for this study. Importantly, establishing the reasons for my decision to examine the PPPB policy serves to clarify my position

as a researcher. Also, an illustration of the context of teachers' professional development and their position within the civil service helps to clarify what the teachers' starting point is regarding their professional expertise and understanding of professionalism when they begin their careers.

The next chapter considers the international literature relating to the issues on the educational policymaking process, the changing paradigms of teacher professionalism and the influence of global education trends and models to gain further insights for the rationale behind the formulation of the PPPB policy.

Chapter 3
Literature Review and Theoretical Framing

3.1 Introduction

Chapter 3 provides a review of the literature in an international context to establish the theoretical framing for this study and focuses on CPD as a component of educational reform which is the main focus of this study. Furthermore, this chapter seeks to understand the rationale for CPD to be utilised as a strategy for reform and how it will impact teacher learning, professionalism and growth. Additionally, the position of teacher professionalism and CPD within education reform globally will be examined in this chapter.

Firstly, it offers a discussion of the educational policymaking and implementation processes, highlighting the trends and mechanisms used within global education governance. Secondly, it considers the literature on the systemic context of teacher professionalism before considering the role that CPD plays in this process. Accordingly, this information then leads to the review of the literature about what constitutes professional development, motives for teachers' engagement in CPD and the types of CPD available. The chapter concludes with a theoretical framing on how the theory regarding teacher CPD might contribute to a better understanding of policy, its impact on practice and, finally providing a reminder of the research focus.

3.2 Educational Policymaking and Implementation

Several comparative educational policy studies recognised the fact that some international educational reform proposals bear a notable similarity (Riley and Torrance, 2003; Verger, 2014; Sahlberg, 2016). In fact, they argue that the influence and agendas of certain global actors amount to a system of global governance of education. For some, (particularly those written earlier, Crossley, 1990; Taylor et

al., 1997; Watson, 1999), the issue is about uncritical policy borrowing between countries, but for others, there are global policy frameworks and actors that are intentionally exerting influence on education policies of nation-states Rizvi and Lingard, 2010; Ozga, 2011). However, without understanding first the concepts and the processes of policy, it will be challenging to make sense of and understand why such influences contribute to the global governance of education. Thus, this chapter initially explores the concepts and processes of policy, particularly focusing on the globalisation and trends of policy and practice, which facilitates in understanding the scope, nature and possible outcome of policies such as the PPPB.

3.2.1 Understanding policy, policymaking and implementation

The vast literature on educational policy reveals that it is problematic to offer a formal definition for the term 'policy' (Bowe et al., 1992; Ozga, 2000; Bell and Stevenson, 2006; Nudzor, 2009). Furthermore, it is difficult to pin policy down and give it a simple definition because a policy is rearticulated and recontextualised across the policy cycle (Taylor et al., 1997). Ball (1994: 15) posits that "the meaning of policy is often taken for granted and a theoretical and epistemological dry rot is built into the analytical structures constructed" resulting in difficulties in making sense of the actual meaning of the term. The understanding of the term also depends substantially on a researcher's own perspective (Ozga, 2000). Similarly, Ball (1994) asserts that the definition or the possible meanings given to the term 'policy' influences the way research is conducted and interpreted. Thus, to determine a description of policy that fits the purpose of this study, it would be of value to look at some policy models first.

Scott (2000) postulates that generally, there are three models of the policy process (see Figure 3.1). Model A, shows that policymaking is seen as a centrally-controlled process, one-way, directive and often

carried out in a top-down manner, from the identification of an issue or problem to the implementation of policy designed to ameliorate it (Bates et al., 2011). Within this model, a policy is developed and determined by the intentions and motivations of the policymakers. The policy choices and decisions are then strengthened and embedded in well-conceptualised policy statements intended to be strictly followed, so that specific changes can occur successfully (Nudzor, 2009). Then, the policy is implemented by practitioners according to the prescriptions, implying a top-down approach to policy implementation.

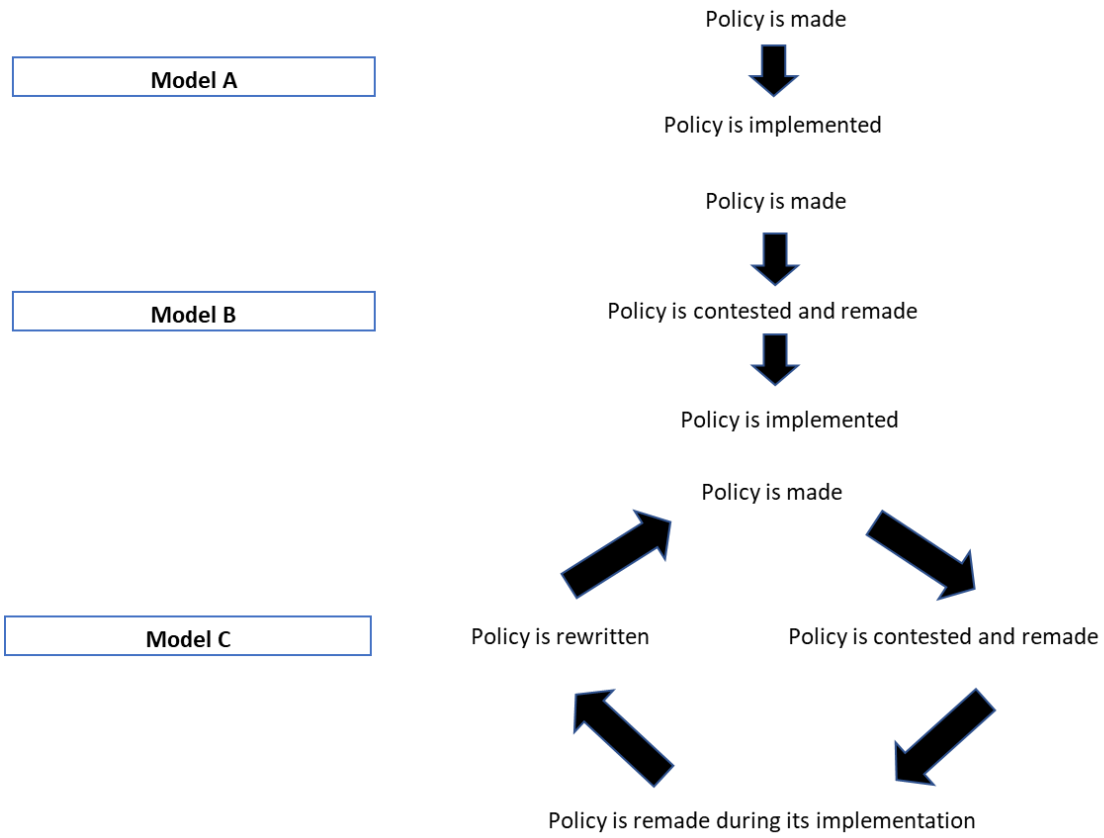


Figure 3.1: Three models of policymaking (Scott, 2000: 24)

According to well-known advocates of the top-down approach such as Sabatier and Mazmanian (1979), this approach primarily emphasises the importance of linearity in attaining an efficient implementation of a policy. Sabatier (1986: 23-24) suggests six

conditions pertinent to ensure positive implementation of policy using this approach as follow:

1. Clear and consistent policy objectives;
2. The policy includes adequate causal links involving policy objectives and clearly defines the target group;
3. The existence of a legally structured implementation process to maximise compliance by implementers and target groups;
4. The policy is implemented by committed and skilful implementers;
5. The policy is advocated by relevant interest groups and stakeholders; and
6. The objectives of the policy are not challenged as the social situation changes.

However, as is the case with all theories, the top-down approach also presents some limitations. Firstly, this approach does not consider the broader public objectives due to its focus on official communications (Matland, 1995). Secondly, it is argued that the top-down approach views implementation as merely involving administrative processes and disregards the political aspects of policy (ibid). Finally, Matland, (1995) asserts that the top-down model exclusively highlights the policymakers as the central actors who focus their attention on what happens at the central level, overlooking the crucial roles played by the local actors who have a more in-depth understanding of what occurs during the implementation phase. Thus, the top-down approach appears too technical due to its hierarchical nature, thereby indicating a command and control system to ensure policy compliance. In addition, this model, according to Bowe et al. (1992), seems to segregate policy formulation from the task of implementation and does not recognise the dynamics of policy process as it "ignores the

struggles over policy (particularly at the micro level) and reinforces a managerialist rationality of policy" (Nudzor, 2009: 88).

In relation to the drawbacks of the top-down approach, scholars like Elmore (1979) and Lipsky (1980) went against the view that implementers must fully comply with policies formulated at the central level. The bottom-up approach requires policymakers "to operate in ways that depart from policy-making-as-usual" (Honig, 2004: 557). This approach suggests that to have a better understanding of the implementation gaps, sufficient effort should be initiated and encouraged from the bottom rather than the top. 'Bottom-uppers' begins with "an analysis of the multitude of actors who interact at the operational (local) level on a particular problem or issue" (Sabatier, 1986: 22), placing non-traditional demands on policymakers (Honig, 2004), in the search for a holistic view of the implementation strategies and interactions. The reason for such a view is that local bureaucrats are perceived to be more influential in delivering and shaping the implementation of a policy.

Nevertheless, Matland (1995: 148) quoting the work of Berman (1978) states that "most implementation problems stem from the interaction of a policy with the micro level institutional setting". Furthermore, it is argued that a wide disparity of "how the same national policy is implemented at the central and local level" and exists because policymakers at the central level have limited influence over local realities (ibid). As such, local implementers must be given the freedom to make judgements concerning implementation strategies that suit the local conditions. In so doing, policy using the bottom-up approach needs to be accompanied by a local implementation plan and strategy to ensure proper support and productive interactions between implementers are in train. The bottom-up approach is also critiqued because local implementers often ignore national policy goals and overemphasise personal goals (ibid).

The two approaches mentioned above are the basic models in comprehending the linear process of policy implementation. What distinguishes them apart, is the fact that the top-down approach stresses the hierarchical levels between policy creation and implementation whereas, the bottom-up approach, in contrast, does not separate the process of policy development and policy implementation. Therefore, both approaches are of obvious relevance and importance to consider. In other words, when undertaking policy analysis, one must understand both the administrative policymaking process at the top level and how the policy is communicated at the bottom level.

Next, model B, known as a pluralist model involves the participation and negotiations of many policy actors. The interests of various stakeholders in this model are considered at every phase of the policy process (Taylor et al., 1997; Trowler, 1998; Ozga, 2000). Unlike model A, the pluralist model is recognised as non-linear due to the distinct process of policymaking and policy implementation. Although the policy is contested and remade before it is implemented, the central authority has the power to manipulate the process and be selective of the views to be included in the policy (Nudzor, 2009). In this regard, "policymakers always have a clear idea of what they want and how it can be achieved. It, therefore, ignores the serendipitous and muddled nature of the policy process" (Scott, 2000: 22).

In contrast to model A and B, model C gives the impression that policymaking should never be categorised as top-down or linear. Instead, it should be understood as devious and fragmented in which, original intentions of policies are seldom achieved. This model suggests that "policy is always in a state of flux as policy texts are continually being interpreted at every point in the relay" (Scott, 2000: 24). The various policy actors involved at different phases of the policy process contributes to the diverse interpretations of the policy's original intentions. It is at these stages where conflict occurs. This notion

concurs with Ball's (1994) argument that policy cycle consists of a set of contested, interactive and non-linear relationships between policy production and policy implementation which suggests that policy intention and outcomes do not necessarily assent in practice. Within such environment, some of the policy processes may involve seeking some "forms of evidence gathering (such as public consultation), and some may involve using trial and error or tried and trusted methods" before the policy is finally accepted (Cairney, 2016: 18-19). Therefore, in model C, the policy process is regarded as fragmented and multi-directed.

In consideration of these three models, Scott (2000) who examined policy texts in the context of the United Kingdom, claims that the first two models have shown to be flawed due to the separation between policymaking from policy implementation and; the last model encompasses more of the features of the educational policy. On this note, model C appears to be related to the more recent model of policymaking. The present work on policy suggests that although there are many versions of the policy cycle, a generic policy cycle is commonly employed within governments. This preference is because "it is a simple model that can be understood by non-specialists and it can be used by policymakers to describe and prescribe policy" (Cairney, 2016: 17).

A generic policy cycle features an agenda setting, policy formulation, legitimation, implementation, evaluation and policy maintenance, and succession or termination as shown in Figure 3.2. This model also gives the impression that the policy cycle involves a continuous process. However, in reality, the process may not move in orderly stages and may instead, produce random consequences due to the interaction between cycles and stages of the policy process (Cairney, 2016). This notion supports Scott's (2000) illustration of the fragmented and multi-directed policy model and Ball's (1998) assumption that policy formulation does not only engage in a linear

manner but also in discursive and ideological ways to achieve specific intentions of policy change.

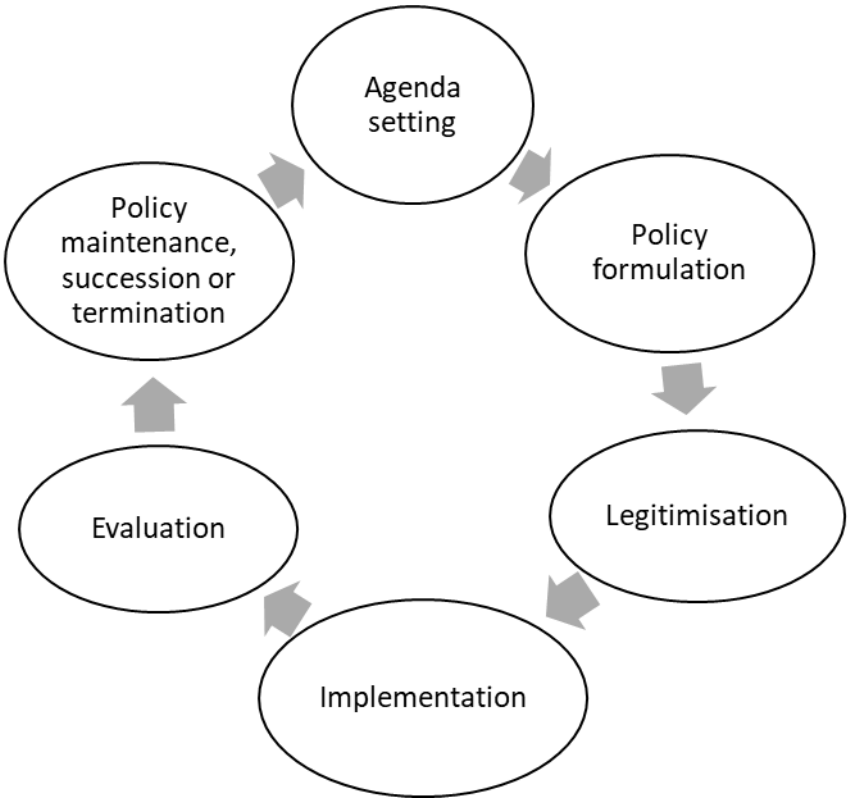


Figure 3.2: A generic policy cycle (Cairney, 2016: 18)

In summary, model A appears to most closely reflect the assumptions regarding policy formulation and implementation in Malaysia, including my own assumptions when I embarked on this study. As set out in Chapter 2 (see Section 2.2.2), the highly-centralised administrative system requires most decision-making to be made at the top level, and implementation is seen as separate from the policymaking process which resulted in policymakers and teachers tending to subscribe to the rationalist model of policy. In this regard, Hamid (2017) showed that when a policy process was examined from the district level, model A was not sufficient to explain policymaking processes in Malaysia. However, closer examination at both the policymaking and implementation process of the PPPB policy may

provide clearer insights into the relationship between models of policy and their influence on practice. Also, closer examination may make the 'messiness' of policymaking more visible. In achieving this aim, the methodology looks at perspectives of those near the 'top' of the policy hierarchy in Malaysia, the policymakers who penned the PPPB, and teachers, positioned as implementers at the bottom. However, by attributing value to both perspectives within an interpretivist approach, I challenge the positioning of authority and allow for an analysis that exposes other possibilities for conceptualising the policy formulation-implementation in Malaysia.

The next section concentrates specifically on the context which influences the trends of international education policy and practice including the rhetoric of 'global imperatives' that underpins a host of policy prescriptions that appear to have affected the way teachers work.

3.2.2 Globalisation and trends in educational policy and practice

Globalisation is the notion used to make sense of the many predicaments contributing to the rapid interconnection of countries globally as an outcome of profound technological developments and advancements in various aspects particularly communications which have changed the way information is shared (Giddens, 1994; Rizvi and Lingard, 2010). Consequently, borders are no longer viewed as impassable barriers to any connection and integration between nations, enabling people from disparate locations to experience events instantaneously. Indeed, this situation is also the case for policies, particularly, the educational policy as there has been exponential growth in studies theorising the movement of policy and practice across nations in pursuit of improving their education systems and the pressure to ensure competitiveness with the rest of the world.

Sahlberg (2006: 263) argues that many existing international educational policies are shaped by "the common challenges brought

about by the network society and knowledge-based economies". Furthermore, this circumstance has led virtually to a worldwide move from social democratic to favour-free market capitalism or neoliberal orientations in terms of educational directions and governance leading to educational policy to favour "corporatisation, privatisation, and commercialisation on one hand, and greater demand for accountability on the other" (Lipman, 2004 cited in Rizvi and Lingard, 2010: 3). Simultaneously, since the educational policy has become part of the broader economic policy, educational agendas tend to focus on a limited set of interests around the development of human capital (Taylor et al., 1997; Rizvi and Lingard, 2010). In this regard, education needs have been redefined "to meet the needs of the global economy and to ensure the competitiveness of the national economy" (Rizvi and Lingard, 2010: 3).

Sahlberg's (2016) description of the five common features of global educational reforms reflect the redefinition of these education needs and how it has affected the current education landscape as well as the direction of educational policies, particularly, the ones related to teachers. The first is increasing 'competition between schools' which occurred because, with the introduction of alternative forms of education, parents are offered more choices regarding their children's schooling. Similar to the understanding of choice and competition in the global market, competition is what ensures consumers receive a good deal. The availability of school rankings not only permits parents to 'shop around' for what they perceive as a 'good' school, but it also results in schools to compete for students as well (Levin and Belfield, 2003). While on the one hand, such competition promotes school quality, but on the other hand, it creates pressure for teachers to realise the expectations both from parents and the school itself.

The second feature is 'standardisation in education'. This characteristic emerged because policymakers assume that setting clear, suitable ambitious benchmarks for schools will result in quality

improvement of intended outcomes. Also, they assumed that the enforcement of external standardised testing and school evaluation systems against standard-driven education policies would provide sufficient structure to evaluate pedagogy, interventions and resources to further improve education quality (Sahlberg, 2016). Nevertheless, standardisation appears to draw perimeters to the curriculum and de-professionalises teachers, resulting in their creativity and critical thinking skills to be limited or restricted.

The third feature 'focuses on core subjects in the curriculum', such as literacy and numeracy which became popular and important due to the recognition of international student tests such as PISA, Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) and Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) as benchmarks of educational performance. In turn, "these core subjects have now become to dominate what pupils study, teachers teach, schools emphasise, and national education policies prioritise in most parts of the world" (Sahlberg, 2016: 5). However, such focus further narrowed "the curriculum and driving teaching in exactly the opposite direction" and that "as test scores have risen, educational standards may have actually declined" (Wyse and Torrance, 2009: 224 - 225).

The fourth common feature of global educational reforms is 'test-based accountability' that is, to make teachers and schools responsible for students' performance through external standardised tests in schools. In so doing, the culture of inspecting, evaluating, and rewarding or punishing schools and teachers became more evident just like the 'carrot and stick' approach to motivation (Sheninger, 2012). Teachers tend to be enacting it not because they are willing to, but because of the rewards which could be in the form of financial incentives and fast-track career progression that awaits them. Also, how the accountability mechanism is placed has in some ways affected teachers' work and practice (Lasky, 2005), diminishing their

“professional responsibility and autonomy” as their work intensified (Day and Smethem, 2009: 147).

The fifth and final international trend in educational reform is ‘school autonomy' that is required for greater parental choice. School autonomy ideology allows schools to acquire the freedom to determine and choose their own teachers, the teaching methods and performance measurement appropriate for the schools (Sahlberg, 2016). However, holding more administrative responsibilities at the school level denotes that schools must also be answerable to various stakeholders including national and local authorities (World Bank, 2011). Thus, school autonomy often means more control over budgets, teacher recruitment (hiring and firing) and management but not necessarily more control over curriculum and assessment, which are regulated through high stakes assessments and inspection regimes.

All the features mentioned above indicate that the trends in educational reforms especially in the context of globalisation are argued to be intimately linked to how curriculum, pedagogy and evaluations are being reframed (Rizvi and Lingard, 2010; Bates et al., 2011). Indeed, there appears to be a need for "new forms of skill, knowledge and dispositions as well as better, more efficient and effective systems to be achieved through more robust and coordinated regimes of accountability" (Rizvi and Lingard, 2010: 93). In brief, education then becomes a tool to prepare students for effective and efficient participation in a global economy, especially when the qualities sought after in skilled and trained individuals have very much changed due to economic competitiveness. Moreover, since problems or issues in education are perceived as common or similar across various education systems, solutions and reform efforts are becoming much more comparable resulting in the homogenisation of national education policies by incorporating them with wide-ranging international trends (Sahlberg, 2006). Hence, the next section reviews the mechanisms

involved in the process of global governance of education and how these function as part of policymaking.

3.2.3 Mechanisms for the global governance of education

There are several mechanisms involved in the attempt to govern education globally which include: cross-national surveys and league tables, policy-borrowing, international policy agendas (e.g. Education for All (EFA), Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) framework), neoliberal logics and commercialisation of education which in some ways have affected how local policies are developed.

The main mechanism used in international policy forums offer cross-cultural comparisons through league tables that influence school reformers to redesign schools and education systems (Ozga, 2012; Sellar and Lingard, 2013; Sahlberg, 2016). The increasing growth of these league tables also saw the growing influence of international agents and organisations; a more complex global architecture which becomes a cross-national negotiation between different types of actors including governments, teachers' union, civil society and commercial representatives. For example, the OECD succeeded in promoting a certain version of the human capital theory that emphasises the contribution of education towards economic competitiveness because of the authority it assumes on the back of the PISA survey (Grek, 2009). Also, through publications on selected themes related to human capital development and globalisation as well as analysis of international indicators of performance, the OECD has continuously promoted policy recommendations (OECD, 2015). Put differently; economic competitiveness has been presented to the OECD governments as the rationale for policy borrowing. However, in most cases according to Steiner-Khamsi (2003: 4), "references to international comparative studies or league tables tend to be made if (and only if) they resonate with ongoing domestic policy debates".

In relation to teachers, through the Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) survey, for instance, the OECD has contributed to the more pronounced role of teachers for educational reform, placing them as determinants of education quality (Barrett and Sorenson, 2015). As it is with PISA being used to present their version of human capital theory as part of the global education agenda, the OECD also uses TALIS as the medium to bring the voice of teachers into the debate regardless of the distinctiveness of socio-cultural environments of the countries involved in the survey. Therefore, on the basis of this view, Barrett and Sorenson (2015: 31) further criticise that TALIS constructed "a simplistic and reductive global reality of teacher professionalism driven by standardisation, codification and identification of educational best practices" which then resulted to the framing and branding of teachers with a specific conception of teacher quality (Sorenson and Robertson, 2017).

In addition, reports emerging from the TALIS survey and other accompanying student performance indicators not only led to the ranking of education systems, but also led to how high-performing countries develop teachers' expertise (Darling-Hammond et al., 2010) which then resulted to the existence of "reference society that is the educational system from where policies, practices and ideas were borrowed" (Steiner-Khamsi, 2014: 157). Often, the criteria that made 'reference societies' appealing are their national stereotypes condition, economic relations between countries and their performance in large-scale assessments (Waldow et al., 2014). However, it is arguable that based on these criteria, governments worldwide became fascinated with reference societies, thereby leading to policy actors becoming more likely to consider international standards and so-called learning from best practices in the top-ranked nations. In this regard, assuming the practices in reference countries are the best in education because they worked in particular systems, models of teacher support are

perceived by policy actors as facilitators for change, thus led to the motive for policy borrowing as part of local policy formulation.

Next, the existence of international benchmarking of education systems such as the OECD's PISA strengthened the visibility of the distinguishing features of the diverse education systems and accelerated international interactions in the form of educational policy borrowing and transfer between countries (Steiner-Khamsi, 2004; 2014; Sahlberg, 2006). Through the process of policy borrowing, educational structure, ideas, ideology or norms are taken from one context into another (Philips and Ochs, 2003; Steiner-Khamsi, 2004; 2014). Also, studies on the influence of league tables have increasingly received recognition for their "increasingly powerful influence upon policy formulation across all sectors of education and wider society" (Crossley, 2014: 16). One of the common reasons for policy borrowing is the need to improve what is lacking at home (Phillips and Schweisfurth, 2007). 'Cross-national policy attraction' may also result in policy borrowing due to several 'impulses' in which Philips and Ochs (2003: 452) classified as "creeping internal dissatisfaction, systemic collapse, negative external evaluation, economic change, innovation in knowledge and skills and political change".

The literature further indicates that policymakers tend to 'borrow' policy because the reason or solution for change has been tested and proven to work elsewhere and permits a copy of a successful model to modify or replace the missing pieces of policy at home. The danger of this practice, however, is it may be seen as a short-term solution to an educational crisis. Although much can undoubtedly be learned from comparing education systems and international experience, significant "problems lie in any 'simplistic transfer' of educational policy and practice from one socio-cultural context to another" (Crossley and Watson, 2003: 6). Best practices adopted from one context may not produce a similar result when transferred in another (Crossley, 2009; Priestly et al., 2010).

The next mechanism involved in the governance of educational policy worldwide and its influences in the local policymaking process is the increasing international policy agendas made visible by influential development agencies and organisations such as the World Bank and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) through their policy recommendations and reports (Crossley, 2014). This representation of 'big data' according to Crossley (2014), seems to 'speak the language of power' and justify metrics in social science research, resulting in the tendency for policy actors to view the problems and solutions suggested within the international educational agendas as robust and proven catalysts for change. In other words, being partly reinforced by large-scale quantitative evidence, policymakers see this 'new paradigm' of comparative education as "authoritative, applied and accessible guidance" (Crossley, 2014: 18) to ameliorate local reform agendas.

Along the same vein, the politics of policy transfer became increasingly evident with what Morris (2012) refer to as the 'pick and mix' method to policy borrowing. Using this approach, policymakers identify and select features of policies from comparative education systems that best support their perception of ideal policy orientation. Nevertheless, repeatedly, dependency on these influential international education recommendations dominantly from the Western contexts has the potential for uncritical international policy transfer (Crossley, 2014). Indeed, without careful consideration of the suitability as well as the differences of the contexts, this practice of policy transfer, not only will limit stakeholders' ownership and voice but also is less likely to meet local needs.

Moreover, the pattern of external policy referencing increasingly points towards neoliberal logics which prioritises the relationship between the economic dimension of development with students' performance in assessments. The notion of 'global economy' continues to promote a theory of governance that relies greatly on market

ideologies, minimising the roles and responsibilities of the national governments in policymaking (Rizvi, 2017). Moreover, governments are more likely to select the popular market-based, decentralised form of governance as it is viewed as more efficient and is in tandem with the challenges of the globalisation and discard traditional, centralised administrative structures that are "too slow, inefficient and 'out of sync' with the emergent needs of transnational capital" (ibid: 4). Similarly, Barrett and Sorenson (2015: 15), criticise that with the neoliberal ideology underpinning the World Bank's (2011) Education Strategy and Systems Approach for Better Education Results (SABER) project, "the recommendations for decentralisation and liberalisation of the education sector stand in contradiction to the strong centralised planning". They argue that such an approach still concentrates on results-based management that defines education quality in terms of improved learning outcomes which eventually will improve national competitiveness within the global economy (ibid). In other words, benchmarking systems which favour a market-based approach to education does not guarantee successful education reform or improved quality in education.

Furthermore, due to the shift from social democratic to neoliberal logics, education appeared to be aimed at meeting the challenges arising from the demands of the global economy. The promotion of such influential perspectives of education by international agencies not only have strongly promoted the trend towards a global policy convergence through similar approaches to education reform, but it has also led to the education field being commercialised. Further, venture philanthropists produced policy recommendations through high-profile reports such as the McKinsey reports (Mourshed et al. 2010) which feed into new education products and services, selling their so-called expertise in resolving the problems facing educational systems worldwide (Barrett and Sorenson, 2015; Rizvi, 2017; Robertson and Sorenson, 2017). As if 'enchanted' by these influential

reports which are said to have been backed up by valid quantitative evidence, policymakers select, adopt and adapt the prescribed one-size-fits-all solutions that appear most closely related to the local issues.

Overall, the purpose and governance of education globally appeared to have been reshaped and influenced by the mechanisms mentioned in the above discussion and Malaysia is no exception. The constant movement of policy ideas and programmes internationally points to the fact that despite the diverse needs of education systems, paradoxically, Malaysia seems to have incorporated collective 'international standards' and 'best-practices' elsewhere in its national policymaking discourses (Mohd Noor, 2013). Although simultaneously influenced by other mechanisms of global governance of education, the policy borrowing mechanism seems to be of most relevance to Malaysia in this case. The participation in TIMSS, PISA and TALIS has implied its dependency on performance indicators and how the country aspired to be positioned in these international surveys which reflect its desire to learn from the high-performing education systems as a means to sustain the competitiveness of its economy. Hence, it is within this dimension that this study seeks to examine if this is mirrored in the formulation of the PPPB policy.

3.3 Understanding CPD and Teacher Professionalism

Since the PPPB policy focuses on the strategies to change the ways teachers engage with CPD, reviewing the literature related to their CPD practices and professionalism is significant. The attention of the following sections is focused on this literature.

3.3.1 Definitions of CPD

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is often used interchangeably in the literature with terms such as professional development, continuing education, in-service training, staff

development and lifelong learning. CPD is "a long-term process that includes regular opportunities and experiences planned systematically to promote growth and development in the profession" (Villegas-Reimers, 2003: 12). It is also a process by which teachers learn new skills or knowledge through various activities including formal and informal training with the purpose of improving teaching quality which ultimately, benefit the students (Day, 1999). CPD is ongoing and requires teachers to extend their commitment to learning throughout their teaching career (ibid). Avalos (2010: 10), alternatively, claims that "CPD is about teachers' learning, learning how to learn, and transforming their knowledge into practice for the benefit of their students' growth". In the PPPB policy itself, CPD is understood as teachers' learning experiences gained through their engagement in formal and informal CPD activities throughout their career to improve knowledge, skills, expertise and relevant professional values to ensure quality that is coherent with the need of education for the 21st-century (Ministry of Education, 2014).

The above shows that the term CPD has varied meanings in which "the purposes, processes and impact are often undifferentiated and diffuse" (Day and Sachs, 2004: 23). Despite these differences, most CPD activities share a common intention: to bring about change (Guskey, 2000). Nevertheless, the concept of CPD is frequently left "ill-defined being in many cases conflated with the related concepts of in-service training and on the job learning" (Goodall et al., 2005: 26). Further, they view CPD as encompassing varied choices of activities and settings, related to professional identities and roles but, it is entirely different from the wider conception of lifelong learning (ibid). Friedman and Phillips (2004: 361) observed that professionals might have misunderstood the meaning and rationale of CPD because:

> Professionals have a limited view of CPD - seeing it as training, a means of keeping up-to-date, or a way to build up a career. However, professional associations claim that CPD is: part of lifelong learning; a means of gaining career security; a means of personal development; a means of assuring the public that individual professionals are up-to-date; a method whereby professional associations can verify competence; and a way of providing employees with a competent and an adaptable workforce.

This misconception may have resulted in some teachers conceptualising the purpose of CPD as merely a way to update their skills and knowledge, thereby limiting their vision of CPD. Such a view may also contribute to teachers being less motivated about their professional development. Also, the people responsible for planning CPD such as policymakers and school leaders tend to neglect teachers' perceptions of CPD and the relevance of diverse CPD activities to teachers' work and practice. The work of these scholars suggests that the confusion emerges due to the disparity between the concept of CPD and its practice and the divergence in policymakers' views.

To avoid further misunderstanding, it appears to be that teachers need to be more involved and committed to regulating their individual CPD. Gray (2005) claims that the term CPD itself refers to the shift of responsibilities from the government to the teachers, indicating the need for teachers to be responsible for their own professional growth and development. Unfortunately, the use of this terminology alone is inadequate to transfer the responsibilities between the two parties. It is thus, arguable that the proper system and practice of CPD have the potential to allow for that transfer to gradually occur. In this respect, interrogating the PPPB policy against the Spectrum of CPD Models developed by Kennedy (2014) seems relevant to understand further the context and the kind of teacher professionalism being shaped by the Ministry. This framework will be discussed in the subsequent sections.

3.3.2 The perspectives of teacher professionalism

Teacher professionalism is a challenging concept to define due to the lack of consensus over the meaning and contestation between various interest groups (Hilferty, 2008). The concept is also used in various contexts, not static and the meaning is often redefined in response to changes in public discourses, external mandates, and educational developments (Sachs, 2003). However, a range of theoretical perspectives has been applied towards understanding teacher professionalism. For instance, Hoyle (1975: 315) justified professionalism as "those strategies and rhetoric's employed by members of an occupation in seeking to improve status, salaries and conditions". Evans (2011: 855) on the other hand interprets professionalism as "something that applies to every occupational workforce" and is "qualitatively neutral", implying it as a common characteristic of other professions. Also, professionalism is perceived as "a form of occupational control of teachers" by governments (Ozga, 1995: 35). In this literature review, I discuss three different perspectives on professionalism: professionalism as a professional status, professionalism as a means of managerial control and professionalism as part of the systemic context.

Professionalism as a professional status

The traditional view of teacher professionalism centres on the categorisation, management and responsibility of the profession. The focus is on identifying the distinct status of a professional group (Kennedy, 2007; Gewirtz et al., 2009) by making comparisons of its characteristics to identify similarities and differences with other professions. Consequently, many scholars have attempted to list down the features that constitute a profession. Among others, the characteristics include "the use of skills based on theoretical knowledge; education and training in those skills certified by examination; a code of professional conduct-oriented towards the

'public good'; and a powerful professional organisation" (Millerson, 1964 cited in Whitty, 2006: 2). These lists, according to Kennedy, (2007: 5), generally reflected the features evident in "established and elite professions such as medicine and law".

When the teaching profession is compared alongside these professions, it became apparent that teaching cannot be considered as a true profession because it does not have control over the entrance to their occupation, have conservative practices and are subject to external regulation (Sachs, 2003) resulting in teachers having limited autonomy over their work. As such, the teaching profession is regarded as 'quasi-' or 'semi-profession' (Etzioni, 1969) or a 'lower' profession (Haralambos and Holborn, 2000). Being subjected to these notions, teacher professionalism identified in this manner is perceived as an 'artificial construct' with disputed meanings (Snoek, 2009). Thus, it is logical that teachers would wish to be acknowledged as professionals, to raise the position of their occupation in the eyes of society (ibid).

Within this perspective, the importance of the ethical and altruistic character of the teaching profession is emphasised because it is based on "trust, competence, a strong occupational identity and cooperation" (Sachs, 2016: 418). In performing their job, teachers need to have professional autonomy and compensated by the public trust to serve the community (such as the service towards students and parents). The reason for teaching is mainly altruistic, and the rewards that come along with the service, in turn, recognise teachers' contribution to society (Crook, 2008). The rewards, in this sense, are not measured by financial incentives, but more so, on the learning experiences of their students.

Professionalism as a means of managerial control

The second perspective is teacher professionalism; "operates as an occupational strategy, defining entry and negotiating the power and rewards due to expertise, and as an organisational strategy, shaping

the patterns of power, place and relationships around which organisation are coordinated" (Clarke and Newman, 1997: 7). In this view, teacher professionalism is being defined and redefined as part of the public sector's professional mandate and appears to be used to empower or control teachers over their work (Smyth et al., 2000). Much of this 'new' way of looking at professionalism was driven by global economic changes which resulted in stronger, globalised, free-market and a competitive view, but with reduced central regulations and control (Gewirtz et al. 2009; Snoek, 2009).

Governments, having derived the market-based criteria deemed central to effective organisations, have changed the way teacher professionalism is traditionally conceptualised. The 'new' notion of professionalism emphasises targets, efficiency, accountability, competitiveness and control (Goodson and Hargreaves 1996; Evans 2008). Within this perspective, teachers are "increasingly expected to follow directives and become compliant operatives" (Smyth et al., 2000: 1). It is, therefore, not surprising to see that the teacher is "increasingly an absent presence in the discourses of education policy" (Ball, 1993: 108). This means that the characteristics of the teaching profession have been gradually decided and defined by governments, as the major stakeholders, rather than the teachers themselves, implying the limited 'voice' teachers have over how their professionalism is shaped.

Furthermore, the significant changes in government policy and educational restructuring resulted in the emergence of 'managerial' and 'democratic' professionalism. The differences between these two types of professionalism are summarised in Table 3.1. It is important to note at this point, that these models must not be regarded as 'polarised' or 'exclusive' (Day and Sachs, 2004: 7) because in practice, they "represent more a continuum than a dichotomy" (Mockler, 2013: 40).

Managerial Professionalism	Democratic Professionalism
System driven/ends	Profession driven/ends
External regulation	Professional regulation
Drives reform agenda	Complements and moves beyond reform agenda
Political ends	Professional development
Competitive and market driven	Collegial and profession driven
Control/compliance	Activism

Table 3.1: Managerial and democratic professionalism compared (Day and Sachs, 2004: 7)

Managerial professionalism has been more prevalent as compared to democratic professionalism due to its influences on teachers' work resulting from reform initiatives mandated by the government (Sachs, 2001). Through institutional change, for example, it becomes imperative for teachers "to be more accountable and for systems to be more efficient and economical in their activities" (Day and Sachs, 2004: 6). Notably, this type of professionalism is reinforced when the state employs their authorities through the implementation of CPD policies "with their emphasis on accountability and effectiveness" (Sachs, 2001: 149). It is also seen as an attempt to reconsider the meaning of teacher professionalism and how it impacted teachers' practice (Day and Sachs, 2004). However, such an interpretation of professionalism depends on how they make sense of the rationale for the institutional change. Concisely, managerial professionalism demands for:

> A professional who clearly meets corporate goals, set elsewhere, manages a range of students well and documents their achievements and problems for public accountability purposes. The criteria of the successful professional in this corporate model is of one who works efficiently and effectively in meeting the standardised criteria set for the accomplishment of both students and teachers, as well as contributing to the school's formal

> accountability processes (Brennan, 1996: 22 cited in Mockler, 2013: 41).

Democratic professionalism, alternatively, accentuates collaborative and cooperative actions between and among teachers and other various relevant stakeholders in the education communities (Day and Sachs, 2004). Accordingly, this professionalism model greatly promotes the implementation of professional judgement (Mockler, 2013), implying a certain level of professional autonomy. Goodson (2003: 132) advocates this type of professionalism as a "new moral order of teaching", in which privileges:

> …the nuance of judgement over the 'one-size-fits-all' approach of standardisation [that] requires a level of trust to be placed in teachers that they will act ethically, in the best interests of their students and their society (Mockler, 2013: 41).

In a way, democratic professionalism can be perceived as a "demystification of professional work" that managerialist systems and employers advocate (Kennedy, 2007: 9) and which is believed to be achievable through teacher professional development and learning programmes (Grundy and Robison, 2004). Democratic professionalism recognises and rewards knowledge and expertise as well as exposing teachers to a new form of public and professional engagement in the way they experience it themselves.

Nonetheless, managerial professionalism continues to emerge as a more dominant perspective as a consequence of economic globalisation employed in education under "a virulent economic rationalist model" (Robertson 1994, cited in Smyth et al. 2000: 7). The knowledge fields that are related to the industrial market such as Mathematics and Science has increasingly grown in importance resulting in demands for schools to focus on pedagogies oriented towards problem-solving and efficiency along with the rising

importance of large-scale assessments devoted to students' performance (Tatto, 2007). Consequently, under managerialism, teachers are "squeezed into the tunnel vision of test scores, achievement targets and league tables of accountability" (Hargreaves 2003: 1).

In brief, although the nature of these two versions seems different, the kind of professionalism teachers prefer is more likely contingent on which form they subscribe to (Day and Sachs, 2004). Over time, teachers must continuously re-evaluate their professionalism to fulfil not only the demands of managerial aspects but also, democratic professionalism.

Professionalism as part of the systemic context

Kennedy (2014) portrays an alternative perspective on teacher professionalism which she believes to be highly dependent on systemic context. Instead of developing another model of teacher professionalism, she developed a framework to allow "a more systematic and contextually appropriate analysis of policies" related to teacher CPD to examine "the underpinning perspectives on professionalism" (ibid: 694). Such framework is much needed because in the current environment, 'teacher quality' is viewed as a crucial determinant for developing the necessary human capital for the global economy and CPD strategies are assumed to be the tool that could inevitably recast teacher professionalism (Robertson and Sorenson, 2017).

In Kennedy's (2014) perspective, much information could be derived from the forms of CPD that governments imposed, or teachers subscribed to, allowing better analysis of teachers' own CPD experiences and system-wide approaches in shaping teacher professionalism. Findings from these analyses will then lead to consideration of the broader context of policies other than the individual CPD models or experiences. Instead of only focusing on the

demand for teachers to engage in CPD that promotes democratic professionalism, Kennedy (2014) asserts it is also important to acknowledge that certain skills may be more appropriate or suitable if learned using the traditional models of CPD.

Summary of the three perspectives of professionalism

The three different perspectives mentioned in the discussion above imply professionalism as something that is externally imposed, a concept that is limited and interconnected within the responsibilities of a profession (Evans, 2011). "The profession's actual and potential authority, power and influence" are determined mostly by external agencies such as national governments because they are seen as having the capacity for shaping and defining professionalism (ibid: 854). Yet, the understanding of professionalism may diminish depending on the kind and nature of support teachers receive from the government (Day and Gu, 2007). Over time, teachers also need to re-evaluate their professionalism due to the increasing pressure and demands of their profession and professional development (Day, 2000; Sachs, 2003). Nevertheless, it is necessary to be mindful that the discussion on professionalism is dominant in Anglo-Saxon and British-American contexts and might be less intense in other cultural settings, including Malaysia. In consideration of this study, the perspective of professionalism suggested by Kennedy (2014) appears to be most appropriate to theorise the shape of teacher professionalism aspired in the PPPB policy as it incorporates the need to understand the dynamic local and global influences on teacher learning based on the existing CPD system in Malaysia. In this respect, elaboration of the components of teacher professionalism is equally important in determining whether the direction of professionalism determined by the Government is realised as it is intended. The following section discusses this matter in further detail using Sachs' (2016) two-dimensional framing of teacher professionalism.

3.3.3 Components of teacher professionalism

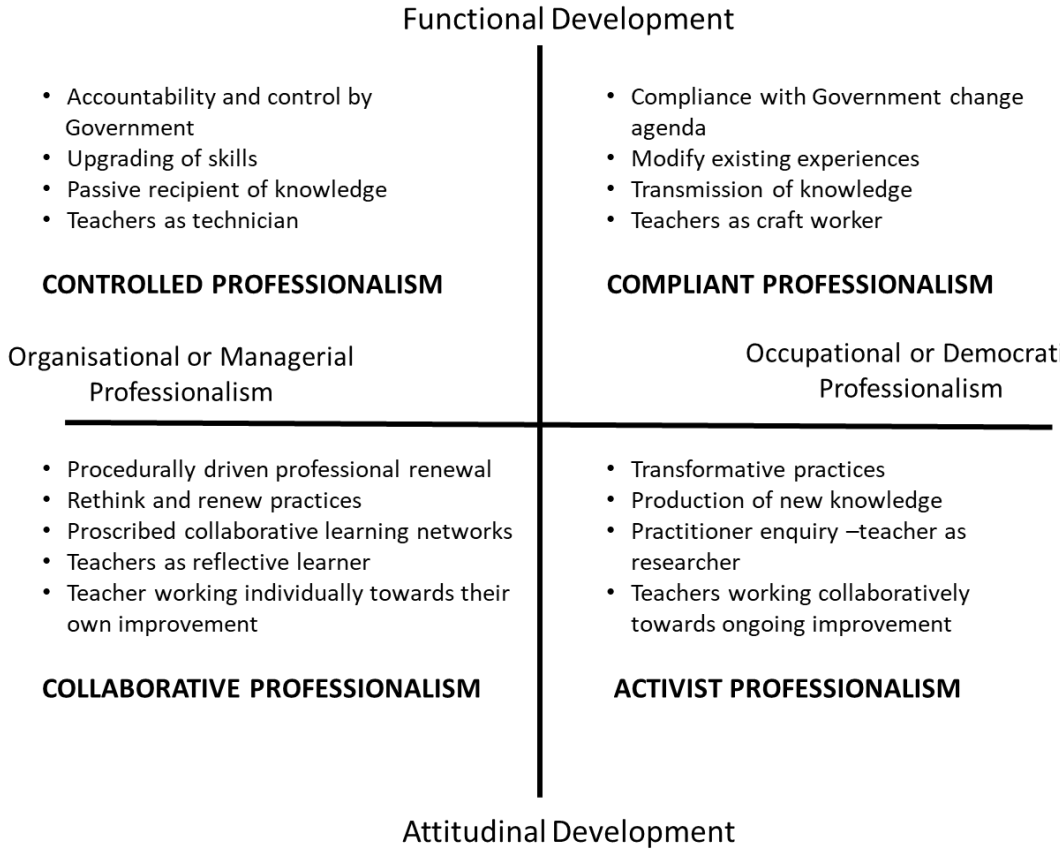


Figure 3.3: Types of CPD and Teacher Professionalism (Sachs, 2016: 421)

Evans (2002; 2008) initially identified two integral components of teacher professional development to change, namely; 'functional development' and 'attitudinal development'. Functional development highlights the improvement of teachers' quality and is normally achieved by imposition, while attitudinal development concentrates on teachers' attitudes to work, closely related to their intellectual and motivational drive to improve individual practice. Both components are equally important for professional development "since either without the other is unsatisfactory" (Evans, 2008: 33). However, since functional or behavioural development usually focuses on improving

teaching instruction and pedagogical knowledge, it "promote[s] limited conception of teaching and being a teacher" (Day, 1999: 139).

In this regard, Sachs (2016: 420) argues that “concepts of practicality and relevance contribute to the development of instrumentalist ideologies that emphasise a technical approach by providers and consumers of CPD”. Further, teachers tend to perceive CPD that focuses on functional development which is typically offered by external experts, as a short-term solution for issues or problems they face in their teaching practices. As a consequence, teacher professionalism is more likely to be shaped within the controlled-compliant dimension (see Figure 3.3 above). Conversely, to enable teachers to subscribe to collaborative-activist professionalism, teacher learning should move away from the instrumentalist ideologies and turn to the transformative approaches. In achieving this end, the forms of CPD that are continuous, reflective and collegial which could be developed and regulated by practising teachers inside or outside school seem ideal (Barrett and Sorenson, 2015). I will discuss the types of CPD in detail in the final section of this chapter.

In her subsequent work on the examination of how teacher professionalism was shaped by performance management and professional standards introduced as part of educational reform in England, Evans (2011) highlighted another component of teacher professionalism known as 'intellectual development' which is related to teachers' professional knowledge and understanding. She discovered that although the three components are of equal importance for the teaching workforce, imposed professional standards continued to concentrate on the behavioural aspect of professionalism while the other two components did not seem to be considered or valued (ibid). Within such imposition, teachers' roles have been restructured not only to match the new professional and institutional standards but also to demonstrate high competency in them. On this note, Day (1999) and Whitty (2006) contend that the imposition of interventions such as

national testing and standardised curriculum appear to limit teachers' opportunities to exert their professional autonomy and judgement, thus continue to place teachers within the controlled-compliant dimension. To increase the capacity for teacher professional autonomy and teacher agency, Kennedy (2014: 694) suggests teacher learning be directed towards the transformative forms of CPD (see Table 3.2) because:

> Autonomy is both an individual construct that can contribute to teacher agency and a profession-wide construct that shapes the ways in which teachers are governed, regulated, trusted and respected as a professional group.

Kennedy's (2014) framework will be discussed in greater detail in the later section of this chapter.

In conclusion, the escalation of the obligation to implement the raising standards agendas appears to further contribute to the reinforcement of the technical aspects of teachers' practice and an erosion in their professionalism (Gray, 2007). Also, the governments' inability to recognise and highlight the significance of teachers' attitudinal or intellectual development in their CPD engagement appears to influence their professionalism. This signifies that there is a gap in the way policies are constructed which is more likely to overlook the necessary elements required to effectively shape teacher professionalism in the direction that they are most needed. Thus, it is also significant to make sense of the functions and positions of teacher CPD as a part of system-wide educational reform.

3.4 Teacher CPD as a Component of Educational Reform

This section examines the use of teacher CPD in the reform of education as a strategy to improve teacher and teaching quality. Teacher CPD has always been widely recognised as a significant feature of education reform (Wedell, 2009). Often, it "focuses upon the teacher

as a learner and an active person, and this approach places the teacher more centrally within school reform and educational change rather than simply seeing the teacher as a means to implement innovations" (Brummelhuis, 1995: 12). Other than its important function in improving and developing teachers' skills, CPD influences teachers' perceptions towards the goals and policies of reform (Little, 2001). Most importantly, CPD is a tool used to support teachers in enhancing students' learning experience (Villegas-Reimers, 2003). However, as an effect of globalisation, there have been notable changes in the forms of learning for teachers.

3.4.1 The changing paradigm of teacher CPD

In the literature, it has been highlighted countless times that global education reforms pose severe challenges to teachers and how they work (Day, 1999; Day and Smethem, 2009; Sahlberg, 2006; 2016). The difficulties occur because it is argued that how teachers teach nowadays differ from the ways they were taught before. Traditionally, the concept of teaching and learning is understood as "linear, deterministic procedures" in which this does not fit with the purpose of change (Sahlberg, 2006: 270). As noted in Section 3.2.2, the growth in education towards neoliberal orientations have shifted the form of skills and knowledge required of students. This shift indirectly means that teachers must have the capabilities to equip students to fulfil those needs so that students continue to be competitive and relevant to the job market. This assumption also implies that through CPD activities, teachers need to explore and expand their existing pedagogical knowledge and beliefs to suit the current educational needs and standards.

Furthermore, it has been emphasised that to attract and retain good teachers, policymakers need to improve teacher CPD (OECD, 2015). As such, policymakers tend to turn to other countries and borrow policies related to teacher CPD (see Section 3.2.3), particularly

policies that were considered successful in complying with the demands of globalisation. This market-based education, in turn, has created a culture of competition which then led to the increase in raising standards agendas in schools. In this respect, teacher CPD is used as a mechanism to ensure teachers accept managerial professionalism that appears to be effective in driving reform.

Nevertheless, Rizvi (2017) argues that within the global governance of education, the idea of 'lifelong learning' which is a characteristic of democratic professionalism has now increasingly become one of the key strategies to deal with the forces of globalisation. He also mentioned that the concept of lifelong learning "shifts the focus of learning from 'knowing that' to 'knowing how', giving rise to new conceptions of the ways in which learning is defined, arranged, valued, utilised and promoted" (ibid: 7), indicating the new and preferred way of learning which involved not only students, but also teachers. Clearly, with such expectation, the way teachers engage with CPD must be changed.

So, to be able to teach students the skills suitable with the needs of the 21st-century, sophisticated teaching must be developed to equip teachers with the appropriate level of skills and knowledge for the task at hand. This assumption calls not only for more effective professional development than those traditionally available in the education systems but also, a cultural change in teacher learning. Therefore, it is timely, to discard the ineffective 'drive-by' or one-off workshop model and offer teachers more powerful learning opportunities (Darling-Hammond and Richardson, 2009). The reason for this is because it is sporadic, fragmented and requires teachers to make changes on their own and without sustained and sufficient support. Such brief CPD programmes are useful for updating teachers about change, but its effect in changing classroom practice is debatable (Little, 1993). Furthermore, this means that teachers are encouraged to engage more with transformative CPD (Kennedy, 2014) that is ongoing,

collaborative and "moves beyond the reform agenda" (Day and Sachs, 2004: 7). Rather than focusing on CPD conducted by external authorities, teachers are given the opportunities to identify CPD that they feel would best enhance and suit their potential. In other words, the changing paradigm of teacher CPD reflects the anticipated change in the ways teacher professionalism is shaped as well.

I now turn to identify the forms of CPD available in the system and link these to the Spectrum of CPD Models developed by Kennedy (2014).

3.4.2 CPD system, rationale and models

CPD system

In this section, I will first highlight the key elements that are relevant to CPD systems, models and rationale for teachers' engagement with CPD to provide a better understanding on how Kennedy's (2014) CPD framework is appropriate to interrogate CPD policies. Her idea of a professional development system suggests that there are differences between CPD systems and CPD models (ibid). Models refer to certain processes and opportunities designed or offered to teachers while CPD systems denote the structure that binds the teaching profession together mainly under the direction of the profession itself. In her Spectrum of CPD Models, she suggests that studies on teacher CPD should go beyond merely understanding the purpose of CPD models available in the system (ibid). Instead, the interrogation of CPD models could be extended either to reveal the kind of professionalism teachers subscribe to or to uncover the underpinning perspectives of professionalism imposed by governments through educational policies. For instance, if CPD research is to be wide-ranging, as it is the purpose of this study, it is essential therefore to consider the examination of the overall CPD system.

Rationale

This section summarises research on the reasons why teachers engage in CPD. Several authors, (Guskey, 1986; Fullan, 1993; Hoban, 2002) believe CPD experience can enhance teachers' motivation and confidence resulting in positive engagement in educational change. Guskey (2002) asserts, although it is a requirement for teachers to engage with CPD by certification or contractual agreements, they participate in the activities with the intention to become better teachers. Further, he contends that teachers believe CPD experience "will expand their knowledge and skills, contribute to their growth, and enhance their effectiveness with students" (Guskey, 2002: 382). Due to this belief, it is notable that for most teachers, becoming a better teacher reflects their capability in strengthening student learning. But not all teachers view this in terms of learning outcomes–which implies a somewhat instrumentalist view of education. The belief to be better teachers may be motivated by the opportunities provided by the CPD initiative (Muijs, 2008), and may lead to changes in classroom practice, attitudes, and beliefs towards teacher learning. However, Joubert et al. (2009) suggest teachers' views towards CPD may differ and shift over time because they are different, and the contexts within which they work may influence their perception. Also, their motives, beliefs, and experience may also contribute to how they perceive their CPD practices.

Hargreaves (2004) claims that for teachers, a positive change in their practice is closely associated with an improvement in student learning. This notion stresses the importance of teaching quality. Several studies on school factors informing performance and the relationships between teacher CPD and student outcomes have identified substantial associations between teacher quality and student achievement (Darling-Hammond et al., 2005; Hanushek, 2005; Yoon et al., 2007; Goe, 2007; Archibald et al., 2011). Equally, Hattie (2012) in his analysis of evidence-based research of over 800 meta-analyses

of pedagogy in high-income countries, found effective teaching methods contribute to student learning. However, in the contexts of these studies, 'quality' and 'effective' teaching strategies are associated with improved learning outcomes as measured through performance in standardised assessments.

Some teachers engage with CPD due to their own willingness to learn new knowledge, reflecting the theory of adult learning (Sandholtz, 2002). In fact, they engage in self-regulating professional learning to stimulate critical judgement and to enhance as well as maintain their professional knowledge and keeping it up-to-date. Day (2002) and James (2007) contend that teachers who actively engaged in professional development believing it is a fundamental part of their professional role were observed to be continually exploring ways to improve their practice and to maintain high standards of teaching especially in the context of educational reform. Teachers' motivation to pursue self-regulating professional learning, however, has a significant bearing on the growth of teachers' experiences and what they perceive makes valuable CPD. Their perception of CPD also influences their choice; either to partake in available CPD or to engage in the alternatives. Hence, CPD opportunities should be "intensive, content-rich, and provides collegial learning opportunities for teachers to improve both teaching and student learning" (Darling-Hammond and Richardson, 2009: 5).

CPD models

Depending on the direction of reform, the models of CPD teachers subscribed to may be considered as effective or otherwise. Much has been studied regarding which form of CPD is 'valuable' and what characterises 'effective' CPD (Guskey, 2003; Cordingley et al., 2003; 2007; Timperley et al., 2007). Much of this research identified that continuous and collaborative activities were better than the traditional one-off courses. Also 'effective' is generally related to costs;

how well CPD achieves its objectives, have a significant impact on teachers' practice and taking into account its financial costs (Hustler et al., 2003).

In reality, the provision of CPD has undergone various phases and what is considered as 'effective' in the past may not be considered effective for the present environment and demands. In the 1990s, Little (1993: 133) claims that "the most promising" forms of CPD were the ones that provoke teachers' curiosities, influence their perceptions of policy and practice; develop them as classroom experts as well as active members of larger professional learning communities. While Hawley and Valli (1999) suggest that high-quality CPD should consist of activities that emphasise the content, context and design relevant to the teacher's needs. In a separate study, Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin (1995) posit, teacher CPD that stresses active teaching, observation, reflection and assessment is most beneficial.

More recent research suggests that CPD focused on developing pedagogical skills to teach specific kinds of content and are aligned with curriculum and policies contributes to positive change in teacher practice (Darling-Hammond and Richardson, 2009; Webster et al., 2012). Other research recommends that CPD should consider the social context for adult learning and allow for richer and productive learning experiences that are collaborative in nature (Cordingley et al., 2003; Goodall et al., 2005; Kelly, 2006). The key is to encourage teachers to openly talk, discuss and share their classroom experiences through activities for examples, peer coaching and mentoring, observing, modelling and providing feedback to each other. When such activities fit the existing school culture, CPD is seen as being most effective (Cordingley et al., 2003; Goodall et al., 2005; Timperley et al., 2007). Besides, to encourage teachers to change their teaching practice, Kwakman (2003) recommends that CPD must be supported by positive learning conditions in which the teachers are provided with the autonomy to determine their own learning. Likewise, CPD that is

ongoing throughout the teachers' career appears to have the potential in improving retention and sustaining teacher quality (Day et al., 2007).

In brief, the literature thus far implies that generally, the rationale for teachers' engagement in CPD is related to improving the way they teach, so that students can learn better. Teachers' professional learning and development involves complex and dynamic processes, requiring a range of different approaches for it to be useful and effective. In practice, CPD offers many opportunities for professional learning, training and development of teachers' potentials. Depending on the CPD system in which teachers are attached to and the direction of reform, CPD models serve different purposes. The models may either be formal (e.g. in-service training, school-based CPD) or informal (e.g. informal chats, professional learning community) as well as transmissive (e.g. cascade model, one-off seminar) or transformative (e.g. collaborative professional inquiry, action research).

Formal CPD

One model of formal CPD that is most dominant within the CPD system globally is in-service training, also known as INSET (Craft, 2000; Goodall et al., 2005, Dadds, 2014). Using this model, CPD typically involves training courses planned in a top-down fashion by institutions, congruent with the increase in competency-based professional learning (Craft, 2000). INSET attempts to improve perceived teachers' weaknesses within the culture of performativity as a strategy to raise the quality of educational delivery (Hayes, 1997). The INSET courses include a combination of training, cascade and deficit models (Kennedy, 2005). As such, INSET is criticised as an inefficient model due to its limited association to actual classroom practice, making it unlikely for teachers to change their practice and how they view themselves as teachers. Also, because of a high degree

of control and a limited perspective of teaching and education, teachers are not offered the opportunity to decide their personal development needs, supporting "a technicist's view of teaching, where skills and knowledge are given priority over attitudes and values" (Kennedy, 2005: 240). Nevertheless, this model might have a place in the context of reform, for example, as a strategy in introducing teachers to the new curriculum or policies.

Another model of formal CPD that has increasingly become a popular approach in educational reforms is school-based CPD which is derived from the short, one-day course or INSET training but adapted to the context and expertise of the specific group of teachers in the same school. The reduction in educational funds has brought about school-based CPD into sharper focus in many countries (Livingston, 2012). This form of CPD, according to Craft (2000) served to fulfil both individual and organisational needs and usually involved input from outside experts and delivered to all teachers in the school. Such involvement indicates the urgency to ensure that knowledge and learning occur and is implemented consistently by teachers (ibid). Although this model aims to offer personalised, more cost-effective CPD, often, institutional needs tend to overshadow teachers' individual needs, reiterating the focus on behavioural components of professionalism identified by Evans (2011) and directed towards controlled-compliant professionalism.

Informal CPD

Informal CPD conversely, refers to "informal learning occurring where no [professional development] PD trajectory or learning community has been explicitly organised to foster teacher learning" (Hoekstra and Korthagen, 2011: 76). Through their follow-up study on teachers' learning in the context of educational reform in the Netherlands, Hoekstra and Korthagen (2011) found that the sources of teachers' behaviour are quite complex and the separation of the

cognitive and noncognitive features of behaviour could be superficial. Thereby, indicating that teacher learning could occur through incidental events (Fraser et al., 2007) or informal networking during their everyday work such as informal chats or spontaneous discussions (Hoekstra and Korthagen, 2011). Also, informal learning through approaches such as peer coaching and professional communities seem to allow greater interaction and reflection on the part of the teachers because, through the reflection process, they are made aware of their actions and evaluate the reasons for their behaviour. The interactions that occur, on the other hand, serve to augment professional learning (James, 2007). In this way, teachers lean towards developing a common sense of identity and tend to be more open to new suggestions (Wenger, 2000).

Nevertheless, Kennedy (2005) warns that it is crucial that the issue of power and positions of authority be appropriately negotiated for the learning to be positive and proactive. This is because "negotiating a joint enterprise gives rise to relations of mutual accountability among those involved" (Wenger, 1998: 81). In this respect, informal learning via teacher professional communities may encourage greater involvement of teachers in transformative practice which fits the criteria of collaborative-activist professionalism.

Transmissive versus transformative CPD

Table 3.2 below presents Kennedy's (2014) latest illustration of the Spectrum of CPD Models adapted from her previous analysis of the CPD framework (Kennedy, 2005). Rather than focusing on the detail of individual models, she suggests looking at the three categories of 'purpose'; transmissive, malleable and transformative identified across the spectrum because this offers a holistic view of the whole CPD system and the type of professionalism shaped by the models within these categories. A prominent element of this categorisation is the increasing capacity of professional autonomy in which Kennedy (2014)

depicted as teachers move from transmissive to the transformative category.

Purpose of Model	Examples of models of CPD which may fit within this category
Transmissive	Training models Deficit models Cascade models
Malleable Increasing capacity for professional autonomy and teacher agency	Award-bearing models Standards-based models Coaching/mentoring models Community of practice models
Transformative	Collaborative professional inquiry models

Table 3.2: Spectrum of CPD models (adapted) (Kennedy,2014: 693)

CPD models within the transmissive category are represented by the more traditional model of CPD which limit teachers' autonomy and treat teachers as the passive recipient of knowledge. CPD of this type is viewed as something that is done to teachers, provided by external authorities and primarily focused on altering practice (Sachs, 2007). In Kennedy's (2014) framework, the models include training models, deficit models and cascade models. Looking again at Sachs' two-dimensional framing of teacher professionalism (see Figure 3.3), the kind of teacher professionalism shaped by the CPD models under this category is more likely to be within the controlled-compliant professionalism.

Transformative CPD on the contrary, stresses the importance for teachers to be learning in and from practice, concentrating on knowledge of subjects, and of teaching a particular group of students

(Sachs, 2007). Transformative CPD being directed at democratic professionalism, allows teachers to have more professional judgement and responsibility in their personal development and learning. Kennedy (2014: 693) explains that collaborative professional inquiry models that fall under the transformative CPD category incorporates:

> …all models and experiences that include an element of collaborative problem identification and subsequent activity, where the subsequent activity involves inquiring into one's own practice and understanding more about other practice, perhaps through engagement with existing research.

According to their research which explores its relationship with the quality of classroom teaching in Scotland, Reeves et al., (2010) affirm, practitioner inquiry is perceived as imperative in assuring the transformation in instructional practices which most of the education reforms nowadays entail. Further, they claim that this form of CPD 'ticks the boxes' on behalf of policymakers and teachers. While on the one hand, it presents a way to ensure successful implementation of innovation; it directly engages teachers in the process of change in the workplace, and it enables teachers to exhibit professional standards that are being applied, along with their obligatory engagement in CPD. Notwithstanding, for teachers, it motivates them to learn, and it contributes to improved status and greater professional autonomy for teachers (ibid: 76). However, it is advised that due to evidence of the divide between theory and practice (Simms, 2013), there is a need to assist teachers on how to make use of their teaching repertoire as they teach (Reeves et al., 2010) "so they can experience how practitioner research can inform, affirm, and sustain their classroom practice" (Campbell, 2013: 7). Regardless, transformative CPD is more likely to develop teachers with what Sachs (2016) labelled as collaborative-activist professionalism.

The middle category known as the 'malleable' category is noted by Kennedy (2014) as the most important category in her framework. This is because CPD model under this category "acknowledges that one particular type or model of CPD can be used to different ends depending on the intended (or unintended?) purpose(s)" (ibid: 692). Despite its importance, it is challenging to identify the type of professionalism advocated by the models under this category.

What could be drawn from the discussion above is that different CPD models have diverse outcomes and the kind of professionalism emerging from the different types of CPD activities also differ. Depending on the purpose of learning, CPD activities could be transmissive and/ or transformative and to realise the aspirations for a learning profession, it necessitates governments to ensure that the forms of CPD are adapted to teachers' professional needs and simultaneously are coherent with the intention of reform (Muijs et al., 2004). As it is driven by the demand for student learning to be differentiated, the same method should apply to teachers. Nonetheless, though it could be implied from the literature review that these constitute the future directions for CPD, careful considerations on the suitability of the models and versions of professionalism should be made before implementing them into the local CPD system. This is because due to the limited literature on teacher learning in other contexts, these analyses are mainly based on the Anglo-American backgrounds and may not be appropriate for implementation in other cultural environments. Nevertheless, Kennedy's (2014) framework allows teachers and governments to firstly analyse patterns and trends of CPD experiences in their individual contexts so that CPD strategies could be expertly tailored to suit the intended purpose of reform and the kind of professionalism governments believe most needed by teachers.

3.5 Theoretical Framing

This study acknowledges the fact that policymaking and implementation involve non-linear, dialectical and multifaceted processes despite Malaysia's highly-centralised, top-down bureaucratic nature. The study is concerned with the variables involved in the implementation of educational policies, particularly on the influences of globalisation and policy borrowing as parts of the policymaking processes. The arguments presented in this study advocate the notion of CPD being an essential component of educational reform. Furthermore, teacher CPD appears to be determined by the direction of reforms or in the ways that the governments consider most needed by the teaching profession. From this perspective, arguably, their sense of professionalism depends on the types of CPD they engage with. Thus, to make the 'taken for granted' assumptions that underpin the PPPB Model of CPD and the perspectives of teachers visible, the study uses Kennedy's (2014) Spectrum of CPD Models as the framework for the analysis of the policy and its initial implementation process along with the work by scholars including Sachs (2001; 2003; 2007, 2016), Evans (2008, 2011) and others.

3.6 Conclusion

Several issues are also depicted throughout the literature review concerning the ways educational policies are developed and implemented as it involves dynamic and complicated processes. Indeed, there seems to be a common, global understanding regarding the rationale and requirement for teachers to change the way they engage with CPD to satisfy the demands of reforms and to stay relevant with the constant expectations of globalisation, along with the pressure to ensure quality education and improved student learning outcomes. Under these circumstances, teachers are expected to continually redefine their professionalism according to the direction that governments believe is most needed. Global trends in education reform

usher in organisational or managerialist forms of professionalism. However, much of the academic literature advocates for democratic forms of professionalism because it seems more compatible with the interactive policy model, within which teachers are viewed as active participants in an iterative process of policy development.

Having reviewed the literature on the position of teachers and CPD in policy, the next chapter sets out the methodology for exploring and comparing the perspectives of both policymakers and teachers on the new CPD policy in Malaysia.

Chapter 4
Research Methodology and Methods

4.1 Introduction

The research used a qualitative method to explore the teacher CPD reform initiative recently implemented in Malaysia. The research design consisted of two strands; one for each part of the aim. One strand revealed the rationale behind and influences on the development of the policy, while the other strand focused on the perceptions of practising teachers regarding the initial implementation of the policy and the changing expectations of their engagement with CPD.

This chapter outlines the research methodology, and the logic behind it, beginning with a consideration of the choice of the paradigm deemed most suitable for the research and the methodological framework employed. Next, the chapter continues by providing a detailed elaboration of the data collection process, research methods, data analysis procedures and actions taken to warrant the quality and validity of the research. The chapter concludes by commenting on my positionality and ethical considerations in providing the transparency of the research.

4.2 Research Paradigm

Consideration of the ontological and epistemological position is paramount in determining the research paradigm to be adopted in a research study before researchers establish the methodology to obtain knowledge of the phenomenon under study (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). In the following section, I explicate how and why I decided to adopt the interpretive paradigm in this study after considering various methodological approaches, research problems and also my personal inclinations.

4.2.1 Ontology and epistemology

Cohen et al. (2007: 5-6) state that 'ontology' refers to "the very nature or essence of the social phenomena being investigated" while 'epistemology' relates to "the very bases of knowledge–its nature and forms, how it can be acquired, and how it is communicated to other human beings". Reality is subjective and only implies that partial perspectives on reality exist and are worthy of study. In this regard, subjective perspectives influence our social interactions and hence are creative or a reality. I began my study with the goal to understand the perceptions of teachers' regarding the present CPD reform and their professionalism. From an ontological perspective, teachers, as individuals interpret various subjective meanings of reality based on their personal experiences regarding the same phenomenon. Through this research, I hoped to gain a better insight into how teachers within a specific context understand and interpret the changing approaches and expectations of their CPD realities.

Closely associated with the ontological standpoint is epistemology, the meaning or knowledge that could be obtained from investigation and what truth could be communicated to others (Crotty, 1998; Creswell, 2003). From the beginning of this research process, I presumed that by talking to teachers, I could extract and reveal their views and experiences with CPD. I had a specific purpose and a set of ideas due to my role as an education official regarding what I anticipated to attain from this research and which may be influenced by my personal view of the subject investigated. However, my positionality concerning the research shifted due to the change in my circumstances and throughout the doctoral journey which challenged my personal inclination and unfolded new ways of thinking. Approaching the participants' CPD experiences from their point of view (Robson, 2002), and construing the phenomena based on the meanings they attached to them (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994), I attempted to examine the data carefully and accurately to ensure the

information provided by the participants was not affected by my prejudgments. However, in this circumstance, I cannot remove bias, but I was reflexive regarding my positionality in this research.

In the following sections, I elaborate on the differences between the two main paradigms in social science research which are the positivist and interpretivist paradigms and then justify the paradigm I have selected to guide this study.

4.2.2 Philosophical stance: the interpretivist paradigm

Research in the positivist paradigm relies exclusively on the truth and on what is visible and observable (Denzin et al., 2011). This paradigm assumes that objective reality exists separately from subjective knowledge and that 'truth' may be identified through scientific approaches, resulting in the belief that findings are replicable and generalisable (Basit, 2010). In the positivist view, one thing leads to the other, like cause and effect. Nonetheless, assuming that a scientific method of enquiry is applicable in social sciences, the positivist paradigm has been critiqued for its incapacity to capture some characteristics of human behaviours such as their intentions and feelings (Anderson, 2000).

As a reaction to positivism, social scientists believe that "what we see around us is a creation of the mind" (Willis et al., 2007: 6). They pursue the forms of knowing, construing and making sense of the social phenomena from the perspectives of the people who experienced it. The interpretivist position on epistemology is subjectivist in that realities are understood through 'perceived' knowledge and "the world does not exist independently of our knowledge of it" (Grix, 2004: 83). This is what Crotty (1998: 44) claims as "consciousness is always consciousness of something" because meanings of a social phenomenon are formed through the contacts with those who undergo it. This assumption is also echoed by Davidson and Tolich (2003: 23) who said interpretivism heavily emphasises "the meaning people

attribute to their experiences." So, facts and values are inseparable, and understanding is unavoidably biased (Elliott and Lukes, 2008). Hence, interpretivism concerns the study of subjectivity over objectivity which involves the examination of various experiences and common understandings of individuals of a particular situation. However, specific measures, such as triangulation of data, had to be taken to overcome the limitations of subjectivity, allowing generalisations to be made so that the findings could be used in other contexts (Cohen et al., 2007).

The interpretivist paradigm provides greater emphasis to the comprehension of meanings in human actions as compared to making generalisation and predicting causes and effects (Neuman, 2000). To justify this intention; it is imperative to note "how we know what we know", Crotty (1998: 8). Moreover, the researchers and participants have interdependent, and mutually interactive relationships in negotiating the research outcomes (Davidson and Tolich, 2003), requiring researchers to remain open to new knowledge throughout the investigation and meanings are constructed together with the participants. However, this interpretivist approach to the methodology is not a straightforward process. Instead, it "formed part of a recursive loop, so that the data collected at each [stage of the research] both informed and reshaped the research questions and the research findings" (Manzon, 2007: 116-117). This notion is reiterated by Ary et al. (2006) that the final objective of the interpretive research is to offer an in-depth explanation of the subject or issue being examined so that anyone who is not part of the phenomenon can make sense of it.

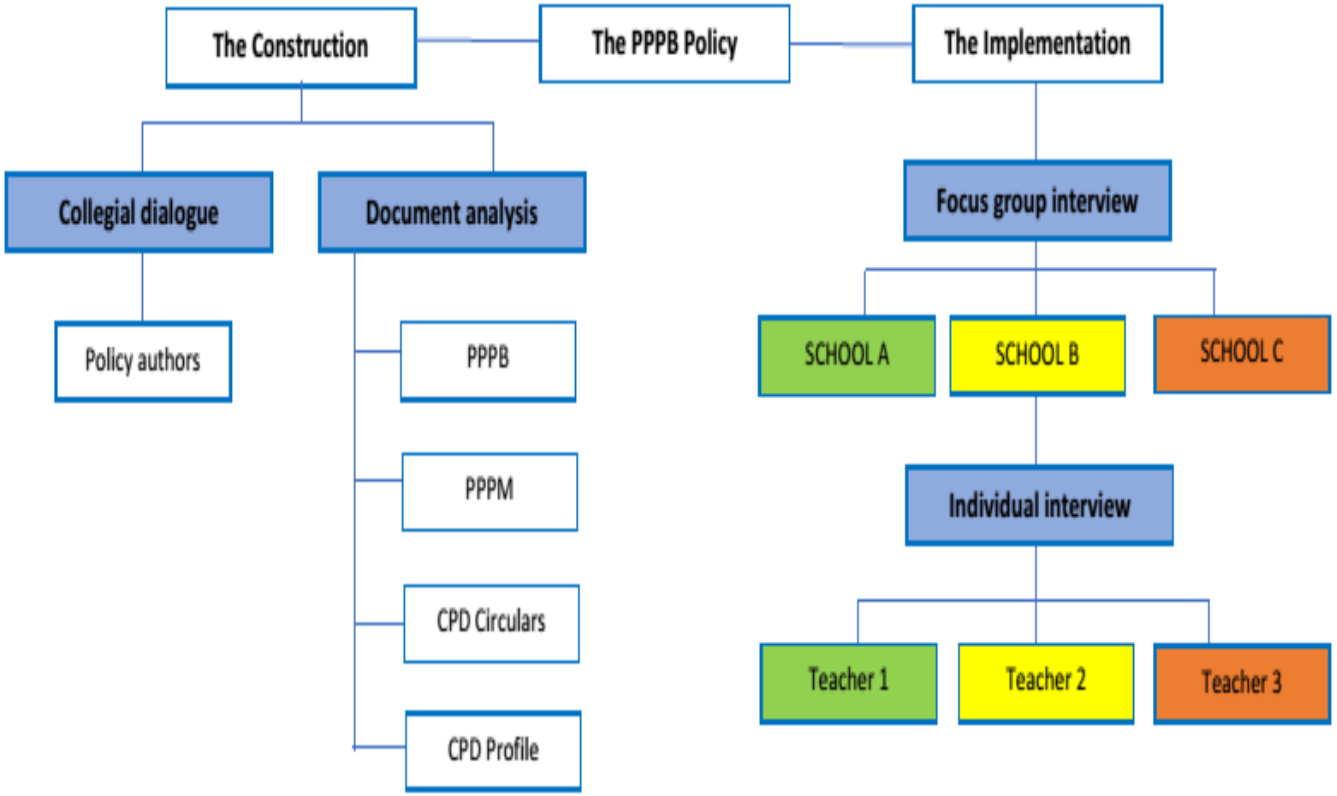
Some of the many issues considered in my research included; the motives behind the policy formulation, teachers' resistance, school CPD culture and the interactions between them. Also, I was relying heavily on the policymakers' perspectives and the teachers' views of the situations being studied to understand the subjective data obtained through their interviews. Simultaneously, I tried to interpret the

relevant policy documents to offer meanings to the phenomena under examination. These, together with an array of factors and experiences which needed to be investigated, ascertained that the interpretivist paradigm seems to be the most appropriate to guide this study since it focuses primarily on social practices (Usher and Scott, 1996: 18).

Nevertheless, the use of this paradigm tends to raise questions regarding reliability and internal validity which led to researcher bias and subjectivity; understood within interpretivism as inevitable and significant. Importantly, it is about making visible the chain of reasoning that connects the data to the conclusions, by striving to make my assumptions transparent and holding them out for critical examination by myself and the readers as well as being open to possible challenges and changes in my assumptions. Indeed, I needed to negotiate my position along this path from a policymaker to an education researcher. To achieve this end, I implemented methodological measures such as; transparency of methods, trustworthiness and reflexivity which may help to prevent any misconceptions.

4.3 Methodological Framework

The aim of this research is twofold; to critically analyse the development of the PPPB policy (construction) and investigate the teachers' perceptions of the initial implementation of the said policy and their engagement with CPD (implementation) (see Figure 4.1). Each part of the aim was the focus of each of the two strands of the research. In strand I, policy documents including the PPPB policy, the Blueprint and CPD circulars were analysed while teachers' experiences and perspectives on CPD under the new PPPB policy was the focus of strand II.



[PPPB] – The PPPB policy document
[PPPM] – The Malaysia Education Blueprint
[CPD] – Continuing Professional Development

Figure 4.1: Methodological Framework

Research questions	Strand	Duration	Method	Participant
What are the underlying concepts and models of CPD that inform the PPPB policy?	I	June 2016	Document analysis: a) the PPPB policy b) the Blueprint c) CPD circulars	Nil
		July to September 2016	Collegial dialogue Individual Interviews	10 policy authors (2 sessions) 1 representative from PADU 1 Director-General of Education
What are teachers' experiences and views of the initial implementation of the PPPB policy?	II	August – September 2016	Focus group interviews Individual interviews	3 focus group interviews in 3 different schools (4 teachers in each group) 1 teacher from each school
How has the PPPB policy influenced teachers' engagement in CPD and their professional practice?			Document analysis: CPD profiles	2 CPD profiles from each school

Table 4.1: The link between research questions and data collection procedures

As part of strand I, two separate sessions of collegial dialogue with 10 PPPB authors were carried out. Each session was conducted at one of the division's offices given the convenience of the location as many of the authors worked at the Federal Government Administrative Centre in Putrajaya, Malaysia. The authors' shared their experiences and reflected on the policy. I was present as an observer and moderator, and the sessions were audio-recorded. The interviews were conducted with a representative from the overseeing agency and the Director-General of Education to understand how the policy was viewed by the people having the authority in the decision-making process. The reason for talking to the policy authors and key personnel as well as analysing the documents was to gain a holistic understanding of the complicated process of policy formulation, to strengthen the validity of data and to reduce the impact of potential bias by examining the information gathered through different methods.

Next, in strand II, three focus group interviews were conducted with 12 teachers from three different schools. This was followed by a one-to-one interview with one teacher from each school. Individual interviews are needed in this case because it is a useful method towards obtaining in-depth "descriptions of the lived world of the interviewees concerning interpretations of the meanings of the described phenomena" (Kvale, 1996:30). Adopting this approach, teachers were not only offered the chance to reflect on their experiences in implementing the policy but were also provided with the opportunity to voice their personal views. The individual teacher interviews were carried out in the schools and also outside the schools' compound. Both the focus groups and individual interviews were audio-recorded.

4.3.1 Pilot study

A pilot study was conducted for this research as part of the university's assignment for the module 'Introduction to Qualitative Research Methods in the Social Sciences' at the end of 2014. The pilot study provided substantive information on the effectiveness of the data collection tools in gathering the type of data relevant to the aims of this study. The method used to collect the data for the pilot study was via focus group interviews utilising a smartphone application called "WhatsApp" (Appendix 1). The reason for choosing this method was primarily due to geographical constraints, the usage of WhatsApp was free, and most teachers in Malaysia have access to this application allowing them to respond to questions almost immediately (Appendix 2).

The pilot study offered a number of insights into the best approach to conduct the face-to-face focus group interviews with teachers during the actual fieldwork. Having analysed the responses gathered from the WhatsApp focus group, I was able to identify possible topics to explore in greater detail, which contributed towards the development of the semi-structured interview schedule employed in the present study (Appendix 3, 4 and 7). The data emerging from this pilot also provided a basis for the main research and enabled common themes to be extracted. The interview questions were constructed and improved based on the pilot study data to gain further insight into the impact of CPD on teacher professionalism and practice. In many ways, the pilot study helped to attune to the discourse, particularly to the various kinds of words and language that teachers frequently used to discuss and refer to their professionalism and professional development. However, the pilot was not used to identify or select possible participants for the study as they were teachers who taught in different secondary schools in various cities in Malaysia. In this study, the participants were from three secondary schools located in the Petaling District, Selangor.

4.3.2 Participants selection

The target participants for this research are shown in Table 4.1 and they were chosen using a purposive sampling method that is regularly used in interview-based qualitative research. Using this technique, participants who live through or have the most experience of the issues under investigation could be identified and selected for the most efficient use of time and resources (Patton, 2002; Bryman, 2004). The number of participants is of lesser importance compared to the criteria used to select them (Patton, 2002) because the aim of qualitative research is towards comprehending the social phenomena rather than making generalisations. What is more important, is the depth, complexity and richness of the data. As reiterated throughout this dissertation, the primary intention of this study is to interrogate the position of CPD as a component of the current educational reform agenda in Malaysia, from the perspective of the group of individuals who are responsible for the construction and implementation of the said policy. A description of the two groups is as follows.

The first group of participants comprise of the policy authors and key personnel who were responsible for the planning and development of the PPPB policy. The participation of the bureaucrats from the Ministry in strand I of the research was intended to offer insight into the influences, reasoning and intentions that shaped the production of the policy. Altogether, 12 authors were involved writing the policy. These authors include 10 education officers from various divisions in the Ministry, a representative from a local university who is an expert in the field of teacher professional development and a representative from the monitoring agency. However, during the fieldwork, only 10 education officers were available for the group interviews. Initially, I planned to conduct 1 session of collegial dialogue with all the policy authors, but due to their busy and conflicting schedules, I had conducted the interview in 2 sessions which involved 5 policy authors in each session. Each of these sessions lasted no more than two hours.

As I was also an author of the report, each of the group interviews was treated as a collegial dialogue (see section 4.4.2) guided by a semi-structured schedule (Appendix 7). Policy authors shared their experiences and reflected on the nature, concept and rationale for the policy and provided information and updates on its implementation. Both collegial dialogue sessions focused on how the CPD policies and strategies were designed, the procedures regarding the dissemination of policies, and the strategies used in determining the forms of CPD to be employed. The subsequent one-to-one interview which was conducted with the representative from the monitoring agency among others focuses on the criteria and expectations of the policy, the factors influencing the goals and objectives of the policy as well as the roles they play in the policymaking process. Furthermore, the one-to-one interview with the Director-General of Education was carried out to have an in-depth understanding of the roles of the decision-maker in the policy chain. As the person who developed the 'growth-oriented training' model which was incorporated in the PPPB Model of CPD, his views of professional development and the aspirations behind this model is seen as critically significant in making sense of the policy.

The other group of participants involved those teachers who formed the core of strand II. Initially, I planned to conduct two focus group interviews at each school, but due to time-constraints and unavailability of teachers due to examination preparation, I only managed to conduct one focus group interview at the respective schools. The rationale adopted in this study was to focus primarily on secondary school teachers as a group rather than looking at both primary and secondary school teachers. Since the international student assessments, TIMSS and PISA only involved secondary school students; it was assumed that secondary school teachers would share more information compared to primary school teachers. Also, based on my knowledge in managing teacher education, secondary school

teachers were provided with more opportunities to engage with CPD as compared to those teaching at primary schools. Whereas, the selection of the three individual teachers, were made on the basis of their active involvement during the focus group interviews. Most importantly, the participants were selected as they were considered to be more conversant in the research area and able to "produce the most valuable data" (Denscombe, 2007: 17).

4.4 Research Methods

The selection of research instruments in this study was mostly predicated on the interpretivist paradigm justified earlier. The research instruments employed in the study included; document analysis, collegial dialogue, focus groups and individual face-to-face interviews. These instruments also served as a triangulation method of the data collection process. In total, 15 documents including 7 policy documents, 2 CPD circulars and 2 CPD profiles from each school were reviewed in the first strand of the fieldwork (see Table 4.2 below). In the policy strand, a total of 2 collegial dialogues and 2 individual face-to-face interviews with key personnel were conducted. In the teacher strand, 3 focus group interviews with 4 teachers from each school and 3 individual interview sessions with 3 teachers were conducted (see Figure 4.1).

4.4.1 Document analysis

Document analysis refers to the systematic technique used in evaluating documents, consisting of information about the phenomenon under study (Bowen, 2009; Creswell, 2009). In this research, it is imperative that the voices and views of teachers be heard. Although it is most unlikely that existing documents will be a reservoir for those voices and views, the analysis of the documentation did assist in further understanding the historical roots of teacher CPD in Malaysia and the context that affect the issues presently under

examination. Table 4.2 below indicates the documents that were carefully scrutinised in this study.

These documents were chosen after considering a huge plethora of official, public documents and because they are perceived as being closely related to the topic of the research – teacher CPD. In this study, policy documents and CPD circulars related to the PPPB policy were analysed. These include the Blueprint and several national development and economic policies which were accessible from the Ministry' website and the EPRD library in Putrajaya. In addition, the circulars related to teacher professional development were useful in understanding the policy process involved and the ways CPD policies were implemented from the central level to the school level. It was found that these documents are closely inter-related to one another and they were used as sources of reference to develop other educational policies. This means that "their referential value is often in their intertextuality – their relation to other texts [which is] a powerful version of social reality" (Atkinson and Coffey, 2010: 90). The 6 CPD profiles reviewed were prepared by 6 different teachers and were accessed from the three secondary schools involved in this study. The analysis of these documents provided insights of the content included in a CPD profile and the types of CPD activities teachers engaged with.

Similar to other analytical approaches in qualitative studies, document analysis necessitates data to be scrutinised and construed to make sense of meaning and contribute to the development of empirical knowledge (Corbin and Strauss, 2008). To do this, research question 1 – "What are the underlying concepts and models of CPD that inform the PPPB policy?" is used as the framework to identify relevant and significant elements of the documents that are germane to the field of study. The documents are treated like a research participant who supplies the researcher with appropriate answers and evidence (O'Leary, 2014). The list of questions used for document analysis is shown in Appendix 5 and Appendix 6. Then, the data

gathered is read and re-read before they are coded and organised into categories and themes that are "related to central questions of the research" (Bowen, 2009: 32). Through this process, the frequency and amount of occurrences of themes and patterns are counted within and across the documents (ibid). Finally, for further analysis, thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006) is used to examine the emerging themes. These findings are then used to present an account of the PPPB policy document including the local and international factors influencing its origins and development which is elaborated in Chapter 5.

Table 4.2: List of policy documents and circulars analysed in the study

Type of Document	Number of Document	Title of Document	Purpose of Document
Policy	7	i. *Pelan Pembangunan Profesionalisme Berterusan* (PPPB) (Continuous Professional Development (CPD) Master Plan)	Teachers are expected to be involved more in the self-initiated and collaborative forms of CPD.
		ii. The Malaysia Education Blueprint	A document containing 11 Shifts (reform strategies and initiatives) to improve the quality of education in Malaysia.
		iii. *Dasar Latihan Sumber Manusia Sektor Awam* (Human Resource Training Policy for The Public Sector)	All civil servants including teachers are required to participate in professional development throughout their career.
		iv. Education Development Master Plan (EDMP) 2006-2010	This policy was expected to close the education gap, establish education clusters, strengthen national schools and improve the quality of teaching.
		v. National Economic Policy (NEP)	The focus of education policies towards social integration and national unity by providing equal educational opportunities for all ethnicity.
		vi. Economic Transformation Programme (ETP) vii. Government Transformation Programme (GTP)	Both policies aim to provide education for human resource development to meet the needs of the social, economic and political development of the country.

Type of Document	Number of Document	Title of Document	Purpose of Document
CPD circular	2	i. *Garis Panduan Pengoperasian Latihan dalam Perkhidmatan Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia* (Guidelines for the Ministry of Education In-service Training) ii. *Garis Panduan Tambahan Pengoperasian Latihan dalam Perkhidmatan (LDP)* (Guidelines for the Ministry of Education In-service Training)	These circulars provided guidelines on how in-service training and professional development for teachers should be carried out at the school level.
CPD portfolio	6	i. Teacher 1 ii. Teacher 2 iii. Teacher 5 iv. Teacher 7 v. Teacher 9 vi. Teacher 10	The portfolio is a document containing information on a teacher's involvement in professional development activities and his/her achievements within 3 years.
Total	15		

4.4.2 Collegial dialogue

Collegial dialogue is a kind of interview; also known as "professional dialogue, inquiry conversation, reflective conversation, learning conversation or professional or collegial discussion" (Simoncini et al., 2014: 29). Such dialogue allows "the learning of new knowledge, questions and practices and, at the same time, the unlearning of some long-held and often difficult to uproot ideas, beliefs, and practices" (Cochran-Smith, 2003: 9). This method is often used as a form of teacher professional development, having much in common with reflective practice (Simoncini et al., 2014). Accordingly, the interviews in the policy strand of this research were conducted as a collegial dialogue.

To collect the data for this study, the collegial dialogue appears to be a better option as compared to the focus group discussions as I aimed to ask the policy authors not only to share their experiences but also to reflect on their roles and responsibilities during the development and implementation processes of the said policy. In this way, more profound insights into the positive and negative outcomes which transpired during the process of policy formulation and implementation could be presented. Also, this, in many ways, allowed greater understanding of the potential gaps between policymakers at the top level of the system and teachers at the bottom level, as the local implementers of the policy.

Initially, the reason for using collegial dialogue was due to my prior relationship with the authors and my position as a co-author of the policy. This close involvement has also made it difficult if not challenging for me to distance myself from the policy. Also, the co-authors are previous colleagues and friends with whom I still maintain regular contact with. This relationship may somewhat influence data collection as they may have responded in how I 'wanted' to hear rather than sharing the real scenario. Although my past experiences and knowledge were useful in building trust with the

authors and towards the ease of collecting data for this research, at the same time, the influence of my positionality in this research was inevitable. My position as an insider and/or outsider to the topic being examined, on the one hand, provided me with an advantageous position while conversely, it might have affected the research process (Hammersley, 1993).

Regardless, using semi-structured questions (Appendix 7) as guidelines, the policy authors shared their experiences and reflected on the nature, concept and rationale for the policy and provided information and updates on its implementation. The session with the policy authors was initially planned to be conducted in one session, but due to their busy and conflicting schedules, it was carried out in two separate sessions involving five authors in each session. Each of these sessions lasted no more than two hours.

4.4.3 Focus group interviews

The decision to use focus group interviews was because, I "…seek to gain insights into meaningful constructs of phenomena which emerge out of sharing and discussing issues, exchanging opinions, revising perceptions, and highlighting commonalities and differences" (Carson et al., 2001: 115) as well as to amplify and understand the findings (Robson, 2002) from a range of opinions. Similar to the rationale for using document analysis and collegial dialogue as the research tools, the use of focus group interviews was also informed by the relevant literature and research questions. Additionally, the specific themes and questions arising from the analysis of the documentation and collegial dialogues with the policy authors resulted in the need to explore the link(s) between policy and practice in greater detail. The participants were requested to comment on the following aspects of their professional development (Appendix 3):

1. Participants' awareness and knowledge of the PPPB policy;

2. Participants' perspectives of the policy and its initial implementation;
3. Participants' perceptions of CPD and the CPD system;
4. The forms of CPD participants engage with;
5. The reasons or motivations for their participation in CPD;
6. The type of support offered by the Ministry and school;
7. Their expectations of the CPD activities that they partake in; and
8. The ways teacher professionalism in their context could be improved.

In this study, the focus group interviews followed Krueger's (1994) steps and guidelines. A small-sized group of four to six individuals was used because this number is more practical in encouraging members to participate in open discussions and may generate numerous ideas on the research topic (Prince and Davies, 2001). The teachers involved in this study were selected at random, but the fact that they were teaching at the same school and had undergone the same interventions provided them with the opportunities to talk about the topic comfortably and openly to the researcher and amongst each other. Despite the intention to specifically interview secondary school teachers teaching the lower forms (students age 14 – 15), and teachers who have the knowledge or experiences with international student assessment, the focus group participants were 'opportunistically' selected by the school leaders based on their availability during the fieldwork. The interviews with each group lasted no more than 90 minutes.

Despite the advantages, focus groups are criticised for their validity and reliability in both the data itself and data collection procedures. Ho (2006: 05.3) asserts that these criticisms are due to the fact that not all viewpoints will be heard, given not all members will be highly involved or interact with the topic. For example, the

findings might be of subjective opinions depending on how the researcher reported the data obtained from the focus groups and may not be considered as a scientific research method; discussion in focus groups is seen as unnatural because it is usually controlled by the researchers and; discussions in groups appear to provide an insufficient understanding of the individuals' experiences or points of view.

Nevertheless, other than permitting the process of member-checking, and discussion and negotiation of meaning, responses from the focus groups, can be assessed for validity (Fallon, 2002). I used the data obtained from the collegial dialogues with policymakers and analysis of the documents in eliciting the data gathered from the focus group interviews with teachers. Through these discussions, teachers explored the findings in some detail and related it to their experiences which negotiated a consensus of opinions from the members of the focus group discussion, which helped to enhance the trustworthiness of the findings in this study. Likewise, this process helped to some degree to lessen the tendency for the researcher's biases.

4.4.4 Individual interviews

An interview is a practical method for acquiring extensive and detailed information from the participants' viewpoint and is aimed at probing views, opinions, feelings, emotions and experiences of the people who are involved in the phenomena being investigated (Denscombe, 2007). This method could be in the form of structured, semi-structured or unstructured contingent as to how much information is needed by the researcher. In this study, semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions were used to identify and to make sense of the participants' insights, and experiences of the issues under examination (Appendix 4). This method also allowed the interviewer to be flexible in terms of the questions asked and the prompts used to stimulate comments from the participants. Each

interview lasted between 60 and 90 minutes. The three individual teachers had been interviewed 3 to 4 times to identify patterns in the teachers' experiences. Follow-up interviews were conducted to check the researcher's interpretation of data from the first interview. In other words, the participants were invited to feedback or respond to my interpretations of data from the first interview; hence the interviews were progressively focused. Additionally, these interviews were used to triangulate the findings on the policy implementation process with the findings from analysis of documents and interviews with policy authors.

The in-depth one-to-one interviews with three teachers provided the basis for thorough investigation of the rationale for teachers' continual effort in engaging with CPD, along with the consideration of the impact on their work and sense of professionalism. Employing face-to-face, open-ended, and semi-structured interviews contributed to gathering detailed insights into the teachers' views towards the impact of the changing expectations on their engagement with CPD. Also, using this method to collect data, I had the flexibility to offer an explanation, leave out or ask further questions when needed. However, at other times, probing strategies were used to obtain a further explanation, elaboration and clarification from the participants. Additionally, the use of open-ended interview questions allowed me to establish a mutual relationship and build trust with the three teachers before co-constructing with them a narrative that locates at their response to the policy and their engagement with CPD to their own career biography and their school; its ethos and the kind of students it serves.

4.5 Data Analysis

Although it is recognised in the literature that various approaches could be used to analyse qualitative data, many have argued that there is no particular accurate method to do so (Miles and Huberman, 1994).

It is also argued that the methods should be incorporated within the research aims and objectives; engaged in rigorous interpretation and, clearly explained with the intention of making the process transparent (Punch, 2009). Since this study is framed in an interpretivist perspective, aiming to explain teachers' social realities in initiating policy change in their CPD experience, the data analysis involved representation of their interpretation of meanings and my understanding as the researcher (Miles and Huberman, 1994). In performing this, thematic analysis was used to analyse the data.

Thematic analysis is a method frequently applied to analyse qualitative data. Braun and Clarke (2006: 79) defined it as "a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data". This method of data analysis categorises and depicts the data set in great depth. The step-by-step guide suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006: 87) was utilised to evaluate the data collected from multiple data collection methods as illustrated in Figure 4.2 below. In brief, the aim of performing data analysis is to interpret the data and extract distinct and generalisable themes from it.

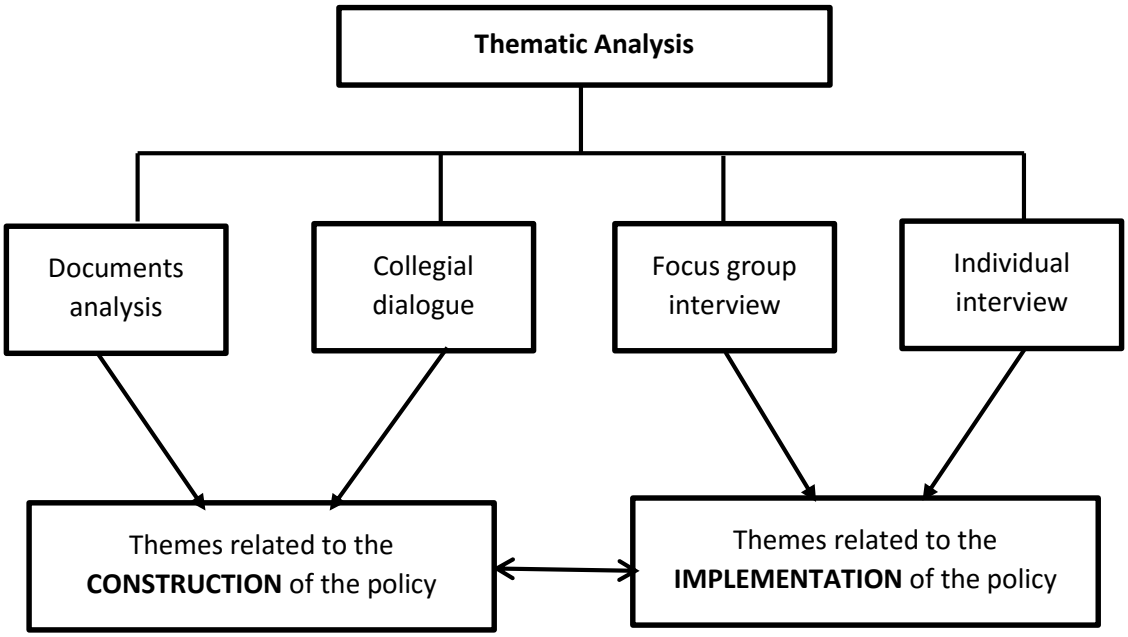


Figure 4.2: Overview of data analysis using thematic analysis

In this study, data were primarily derived from collegial dialogues, analysis of documentation, focus groups and individual interviews. The analysis of documents and collegial dialogues that contributed to the data related to the policy strand, focusing on the construction of the policy; whereas examination of the focus groups and individual interviews assisted in the analysis of the teachers' views towards the initial implementation of the policy. Since most of the policy documents analysed were written in *Bahasa Malaysia*, and the participants and I speak the same common language, the data was not translated into English language during the preliminary stages of analyses. The first coding phase remained strictly to the data and translation was not required. However, for the discussion of findings, relevant codes and quotations were translated into English. The reason for this is because language influences what is often conveyed, and "social reality as experienced is unique to one's own language" (Van Nes et al., 2010) as well as to minimise the discrepancy between the meanings formed by the participants and the researcher's understanding of those meanings.

Both digital and manual methods for analysing the data were employed which provided a better opportunity to understand the findings. For example, initially, audio recordings of the interviews were transcribed using MAXQDA software (https://www.maxqda.com/). The interview transcripts were then reviewed several times to gain a general overview and to identify emerging patterns or themes which could be analysed. During this process, I coded the data using the software but later found coding data manually by writing notes was a better option, highlighting patterns using highlighter pens and using 'post-it' notes as recommended by Braun and Clarke (2006). I was also able to identify, and group potential themes more efficiently as compared to using the software.

Following the 'theoretical' thematic analysis which is "driven by the researcher's theoretical or analytic interest in the area" (Braun and

Clarke, 2006: 84), I identified themes related to the specific research questions. This means that the analysis was not focused on 'how many' themes and patterns are repeated in the data, but rather, the concern was on the evidence identified in support of the research purpose. Although this 'theory-driven' analysis provided less description of all data (ibid), it allowed an analysis of certain aspects of the data in greater detail and influenced the way the data was coded and presented. Nevertheless, data from the review of documents "could fill gaps in the interview data and shed light on the issues being investigated" (Bowen, 2009: 33). Thus, the inductive and deductive methods utilised in analysing semi-structured focus groups and individual interviews were useful in identifying key themes emerging from the collegial dialogues and document analysis.

For instance, the theme 'relationship between CPD and teacher professionalism' was identified based on the Government's aspiration to improve teacher and teaching quality by demanding teachers to change the way they engage with CPD. This aspiration was evidently noted in the Blueprint and the PPPB policy document. Through the process of reading and analysing interview transcripts, I found repeated words, phrases and expressions that later became obvious patterns (Braun and Clarke, 2006) in the collegial dialogues and interviews. Various interpretations and definitions of 'CPD', 'professional development', 'professional learning' and 'professionalism' were repeatedly discussed by policy authors and teachers during the interviews. Figure 4.3 is an example of how these patterns were colour-coded using the MAXQDA software. This data was highlighted under the same codes used in the analysis of documents, and these were organised into themes and sub-themes. Next, the themes were refined via reading and re-reading the data to ensure coherence and its relevance to the overall research questions (ibid). Based on the thematic maps developed through this process, three

major themes were recognised, and these are discussed further in Chapter 7.

In addition, since the central themes have been derived from the initial transcripts, subsequent interviews with the individual teachers were only selectively transcribed. This decision was made because they added substantive content, but little in the way of new themes. In this respect, I acknowledged that this exercise had the potential to introduce researcher bias, based on what I decided to include and what to exclude, which I have anticipated as a means of adhering to the aim of this research. As suggested by McLellan et al. (2003: 67) "the level of transcription should complement the level of the analysis" and should be guided by the research questions.

In conclusion, the presentation of the findings was guided by the main aim of this research, the construction and the implementation of the policy (see Figure 4.2). These findings were grouped accordingly, each being presented in a separate chapter. The discussions of the relationships between both findings are illustrated in Chapter 7.

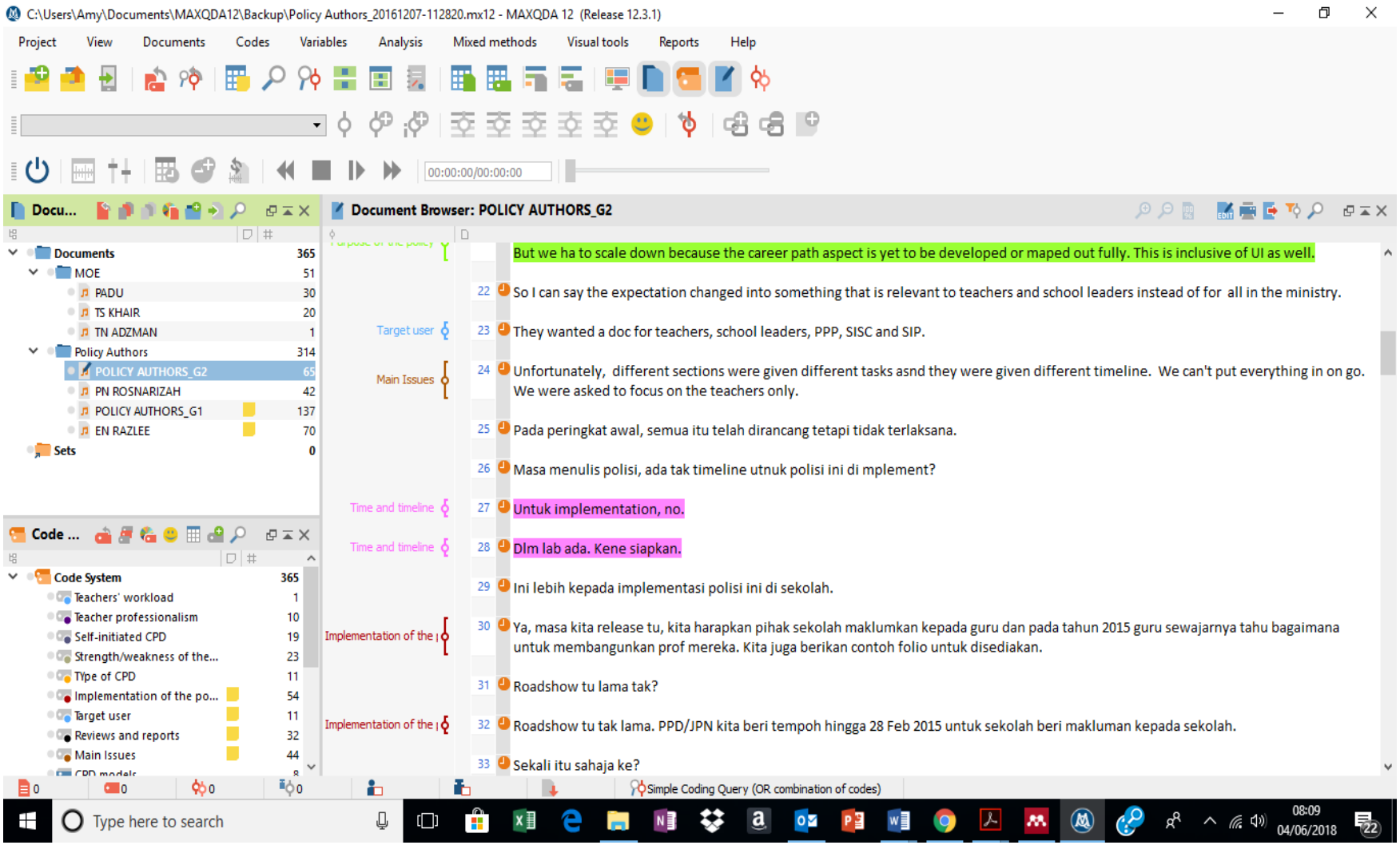


Figure 4.3: Colour-coding of data using the MAXQDA software

4.6 Criteria for Evaluating the Quality of Research

It is recognised in the literature that in qualitative research it is not possible to have a value-free or bias-free design (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994), necessitating the need to verify the trustworthiness of qualitative data. As a means to establish rigour and trustworthiness, this research is evaluated based on its credibility, dependability and transferability (Denzin et al., 2011).

4.6.1 Credibility

In testing for the credibility of findings, it is crucial to make a clear link between the data gathered and the reality to ensure that the data represents and exhibits the truth of the research findings. The use of multiple methods in this study balances each method's limitations and makes the most of their advantages and "sheds more light on the behaviour of the people in question" (Shenton, 2004: 66), which is more likely to promote confidence in the credibility of the findings. Furthermore, the triangulation of methods aided in the removal of potential bias and assisted in the production of reliable data (Cohen et al., 2007). This triangulation process, which was facilitated by various data sources assisted in cross-checking information gained from the analysis of documentation and interviews with policy authors and teachers. Member-checks were also performed once all the interviews had been transcribed and the participants were offered the opportunity to review, withdraw and correct the transcribed information within specific time-frames. The dataset seemed more dependable and trustworthy when the members of these groups verified the data.

4.6.2 Dependability

Dependability refers to "the consistency and reliability of the research findings and the degree to which research procedures are documented, allowing someone outside the research to follow, audit, and critique the research process" (Moon et al., 2016: 17). However,

dependability in qualitative research cannot be thought of in the same way as the concept of reliability in positivistic research because, in qualitative research, researchers strive for consistency and reliability by documenting the ways data was collected to the best of their ability (Merriam, 1995). Dependability could be obtained through detailed documentation of the methodology and methods, and justification for all decisions made and actions that were taken during the research (Shenton, 2004) to allow readers to evaluate the extent to which appropriate research strategies have been adhered to. One way to do this is by asking people to review the research data and findings through reading and criticising (Flyvbjerg, 2006). I have presented my research at several conferences and have received critiques and feedback not only from academic supervisors but also from fellow doctoral candidates.

Besides, by increasing the transparency of the research process, dependability could also be achieved through reflexivity (self-assessment of subjectivity) (Moon et al., 2016). Through reflexivity, the research process is viewed as a focus of inquiry, placing presumptions and bias that could emerge during the knowledge production process between researchers and participants (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). It was critical for me to be neutral while also acknowledging my background, principles and beliefs. In Chapter 2 (see Section 2.7.3), I included a reflexive narrative of my journey as the researcher and discussed the reasons why I decided to look closely at the policy and issues on teachers' engagement with CPD. Additionally, I elaborate further on my positionality in Section 4.6.4.

4.6.3 Transferability

In the field of qualitative research, transferability suggests the degree to which the findings are transferable or used in similar contexts elsewhere (Ary et al., 2010). Since qualitative inquiry is often limited to a small number of participants and restricted by cultural and social

settings, findings are rarely generalisable to different contexts. However, transferability of qualitative research is still possible by offering readers suggestions that the findings might be pertinent to other contexts or by making claims based on the findings (generalisability) (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). In essence, it is suggested that the researcher's responsibility is not to prove that the research findings will be transferable, but to identify the evidence that the results could be applicable or generalisable. As such, and as noted in earlier sections, the use of individual interviews with the focus group teachers was to provide a detailed account of the context of this research to help the readers construct an understanding of the settings and circumstances surrounding the participants' nature of work and practice. In this way, the readers were given the opportunity to make transferability judgements themselves and determine whether the findings were applicable or generalisable in their individual contexts. In this research, contextual description matters so readers can judge how Malaysia is similar or different to other research contexts. In particular, attention to policy context is important for this research, so readers can judge how policy content, the process of formulation and implementation compares to other contexts of education reform, where the same or similar set of global policy agendas and mechanisms of international policy influence have in acted.

4.6.4 Researcher positionality

As noted earlier, self-reflexivity contributes to the trustworthiness of research as it informs researchers to the influences they may be put forth within the research process while also permitting readers to recognise and acknowledge the position of the researcher in the study (Creswell and Miller, 2000). A researcher's role can range from being a complete member of the group under study (insider) to a complete stranger (outsider) (Adler and Adler, 1994 as cited in Unluer, 2012: 1). Insider-researchers refer to those who decide to investigate

a group that they are part of, while outsider-researchers examine those who are separate from the group being investigated (Unluer, 2012).

Given that the context of this research is within the policies and politics of Malaysian education, I have the position of being both an insider and an outsider. I am an education official, on leave as a full-time doctoral student, I worked as a teacher for nine years and was closely involved with the development of the said policy. I needed to negotiate these roles so as not to interfere with the research process because "the positionality that the researcher brings to their work, and the personal experiences through which positionality is shaped, may influence what researchers may bring to research encounters, their choice of processes, and their interpretation of outcomes" (Foote and Bartell, 2011: 46). My insider position had expedited my access to policymakers and schools. However, simultaneously, my position as a full-time doctoral student, made me an outsider. In some ways, these positions have impacted how the data was collected and how I interpreted the findings. These 'insider-outsider' positions have also caused some form of discomfort for me (Hamdan, 2009). The positive aspect gained from my insider position is that I was able to retrieve significant policy documents, which were accessible through my position as an education official and my relationships with relevant Ministry officials and senior personnel. However, changing my role from a public servant to a student, my positionality changed as well. As a public servant, I was concerned with the responsibility to safeguard confidential policy documents and sensitive information as well as the responsibility to protect the Government. As a researcher, I was affected by the desire to discover and contribute to the literature, sharing this information publicly. Conversely, as a former teacher, I felt that I must let the teachers' voice be heard because I have been through similar experiences in being demanded to implement new policies and curriculum constantly.

Nevertheless, over time, I diligently negotiated these tensions in my research endeavours. Using my experience as a public servant and my work relationships with senior personnel, my insider position allowed me to 'fast-track' access in conducting interviews with senior policymakers and teachers. Although I had the opportunity to skip the bureaucratic processes, I still sought official permission (Appendix 8) to conduct the fieldwork as part of the research ethics. Due to this, I was not provided with the opportunity to select the teachers for the focus group interviews as this was determined by the school leaders, which placed myself in a better position when interacting with the teachers. Hence, as suggested by Hamdan (2009: 381):

> In order to gain a more complete view and understand the context surrounding the 'inside', one needs to step out of one's comfort zone to experience the associated and inevitable discomfort. Only by persevering in the face of discomfort can one hope to properly appreciate the insider perspective.

Overall, my position as an insider and/or outsider to the topic being investigated, on the one hand, provided me with an advantageous position, while on the other hand, it might have affected the research process (Hammersley, 1993). In my situation, I thought I 'understood' what it was like to be a teacher and 'knew' what the Ministry expected of them, and therefore thought that I could relate with them and identify with the demands from the Ministry. I was not aware at the time, that this familiarity had the tendency to blind me and close my mind to teachers' opinions and resulted in making inaccurate judgements. At times, I experienced identity conflicts, either to advocate teachers' views or to support the Ministry's intentions and expectations. As a researcher, I needed to seriously consider these conflicts so as not to influence my views and avoid any potential prejudices when conducting and interpreting the interview data.

4.7 Ethical Considerations

This research adhered to the School of Education, the University of Bristol (formerly known as the Graduate School of Education, GSoE) ethical procedure. The ethical discussion documentation and relevant documents are attached as an appendix in the dissertation (Appendix 9). Among others, the key ethical issues of this research include anonymity and confidentiality, informed consent and researcher-participant relationships. I tried my best to make sure that the research procedures were followed accordingly, and necessary steps were taken seriously to ensure no misleading or ambiguous information in the presentation of data as these would have implications not only on my position as a Malaysian civil servant but also my ethics as a researcher.

4.7.1 Confidentiality and informed consent

It is important not only to keep the research data confidential but also to respect, protect and assure research participants regarding the confidentiality of the information they disclosed. Unfortunately, as "…promises of confidentiality are easier to make than to keep" (Van den Hoonard, 2002: 8), as researchers, they have the responsibility to report the research findings, and they could not do so if the data they collect cannot be revealed. Also, the participants' understanding of confidentiality may differ from what researchers make of it (Corden and Sainsbury, 2005). Researchers must not simply assume that participants would have a parallel understanding of how researchers anticipate the notion of confidentiality to be understood. It is, thus, the responsibility of the researcher to ensure all aspects of confidentiality are met (Silverman, 2006).

Discussing confidentiality at the beginning of the research is crucial in order to obtain informed consent and building trust with informants (Wiles et al., 2006). To obtain these, I prepared a research information leaflet together with a consent form (Appendix 10 and 11).

Participants were advised of the nature of the research, and that their involvement was voluntary. They were also notified that they could leave the research in any case without having to worry about being penalised. However, the participants might have perceived the need to agree to this exercise in order to give a good impression and to maintain positive working relationships with the Ministry. Also, despite using this strategy, participants might not have offered their consent until the conclusion of the research project as my study might not have ended up in the direction I initially planned. In such an occasion, participants might have become reluctant to continue their participation in the research. In this regard, participants could adjust their consent (Corti et al., 2000) and I would initiate the re-adjustment.

One of the primary ways to ensure confidentiality is by using pseudonyms for teachers and their schools to protect their identities. When reporting the research findings, I removed identifiable information such as names, location and job titles. Nonetheless, the confidentiality of the authors cannot be guaranteed as their names are included in the policy. In this respect, I assured them that where necessary, their views were reported from an overall perspective rather than an individual account so that it could not cause any harm to them. They were also allowed to check the interview transcripts, and I also gained permission from the authors to use certain quotations in my dissertation. I reassured them of their anonymity and confidentiality in my research. However, such negotiation influenced how I could report the research findings. I was permitted to record and transcribe the policy authors' accounts for this research, but the transcriptions must not be made public due to the restrictions placed on civil servants to give public commentary concerning government policies.

4.7.2 Research relationship and reciprocity

Ethical research is also about relationships established based on trust and reciprocity. Since this research was undertaken from a

qualitative and naturalistic position, I was the primary instrument of research; and developing relationships with participants was crucial to generate genuine insights into the issues being studied. Building 'trust' is the key in building a researcher-participant relationship because the responsibility "not to spoil" the participants' willingness to continue their participation in the study rests in the hands of the researcher (Ryen, 2011: 419). Having trust is fundamental to ensuring a good relationship with participants not only throughout the research process, but this also applies following the fieldwork; in communicating the research. The literature suggests that debate on the researcher's moral responsibility in dealing with such ethical concerns is "littered with dilemmas, and not for quick pre-fixed answers" (ibid: 432). I had tried my utmost best to avoid any harm or put my participants at risk during the study.

As such, reciprocity necessitates the researcher to consider the means to reward participants for their time and effort (Halai, 2006). In this study, to guarantee reciprocity, data involving participants were returned in the form which they can use, for example, the research findings may be useful for participants to reflect on and improve their CPD practice. I plan to provide teachers with a summary of the research findings once the dissertation has been submitted. Also, as a means of acknowledging their contributions, teachers were informed that their participation in this research was considered as a CPD experience and could be recorded in their individual CPD profile. Malaysian teachers need to show proof of their involvement in CPD. Therefore, a recognition letter (Appendix 13) informing their participation in this research was provided for the teachers. To reciprocate the Government's approval for conducting this research, copies of the dissertation will also be made available for future reference.

4.8 Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter has established and justified the research methodology, methodological framework, research design and detailed methods of data collection. Underpinned by the interpretivist paradigm, a qualitative inquiry grounded in the social realities of the participants was used as a means in exploring and understanding the nature, development and implementation of the PPPB policy at the school level. Through the use of document analysis of relevant policy documents, collegial dialogues with policy authors, interviews with key personnel and focus groups as well as individual interviews with secondary school teachers, data on the motives behind the formulation of the policy, their experiences and perceptions were gathered to make sense of the relationship between policy and practice. Moreover, this study also made the most of the qualitative research methods of inquiry, which provided the opportunity to explore both insider and outsider views of the everyday lives and experiences of the participants involved in the construction and implementation of the policy, and teachers' experiences of their engagement with CPD and their professionalism.

The next two chapters present the findings of the study. Chapter 5 focuses on the findings from the policy strand of research and Chapter 6 highlights the findings from the teacher strand of research.

Chapter 5
Origins, Nature and Development of the PPPB Policy

5.1 Introduction

This chapter and the subsequent chapter report the analysis of the PPPB policy document and the analysis of the interviews. The presentation of the analysis is based on the two strands of research mentioned in Chapter 4 which reflect the aims of this study; to analyse the development and implementation of the policy and to explore how teachers perceive and experience the changing expectations of their professionalism. This chapter focuses on the production of the policy by presenting both an account of the document and analysis of the origins and development of the PPPB policy. These includes explanation on the process of writing the text, the policies and sources of ideas that influenced the text and the strategies by which the divisions within the ministry attempted to disseminate in the policy to teachers. To achieve this, the sources of evidence from the analysis of relevant policy documents (see Table 4.2) and the data from two collegial dialogues with the policy authors and the one-to-one interviews with the key personnel are used to frame the discussion of findings in this chapter.

5.2 Origins, Nature and Development of the PPPB Policy

The PPPB policy is a government-issued policy document dedicated to teachers and school leaders. This policy document was developed in line with Shift Four and Five in the Blueprint as an effort to complement the current strategies used to develop and regulate CPD activities for teachers and school leaders (Ministry of Education, 2014). The policy provides information on the importance of transformation in teachers' professional development, guidelines on how to engage with CPD and the types of CPD activities available for Malaysian teachers and school leaders (ibid).

The PPPB policy originated from the *Pelan Induk Pembangunan Profesionalisme Berterusan (PiPPB)* or the CPD Master Plan, which was initially planned as a comprehensive professional development blueprint not only for teachers and school leaders but also for lecturers at the ITEs and other education officials. Unfortunately, however, the PiPPB was not able to be completed as planned due to the delay in the development of several interrelated guidelines. These included the revised appraisal instrument, latest career pathways and the new CPD-point system.

Despite these glitches, the Ministry insisted on adhering to the time-frame fixed in the Blueprint; in Wave 1 (2013 – 2015), a professional development proposal should already be in place. As a result, the Ministry released the PPPB policy to provide teachers and school leaders with a heads-up about the new CPD expectations. During the time of data collection, the PiPPB was still being developed. In early 2017, the PiPPB was officially launched and is now known as the *Pelan Induk Pembangunan Professionalisme Keguruan (PiPPK)* or the Teacher Professionalism and Development Master Plan (Ministry of Education, 2016). The PPPB policy is at present included as a component of the PiPPK. Therefore, it is imperative to note at this point, that this study focuses specifically on the PPPB policy.

5.2.1 The goals of the PPPB policy

The Ministry claims that the policy was formulated as a mechanism not only to improve the quality of teaching but also as one of the strategies to raise the status of teaching as a profession of choice (Ministry of Education, 2013). The focus on teachers, according to the Ministry is because teachers play a significant role in producing quality human capital (ibid). As explained in Chapter 2 (see Section 2.4.5) the Ministry argues that the type of human capital that must be developed by the nation's education system must be individuals who are balanced intellectually, spiritually, emotionally and physically. Therefore, to

develop such individuals, teachers not only have to impart knowledge, but they also bear the responsibility to mould and shape quality human capital (Jamil et al., 2011).

With such heavy responsibility given to teachers, the Ministry believes that appropriate and relevant training is mandatory in order to enable teachers to develop students as 'competitive individuals' who have the capacity to meet the needs of the 'global market' (Ministry of Education, 2006). Although teacher professional development is not something new and has been recognised as a significant aspect of the Malaysian educational policies, the Ministry contends that the current CPD system needs to be improved, and the formulation of the PPPB policy will help to fill the gap of the previous professional development strategies for teachers (Ministry of Education, 2014).

5.2.2 The committee and initial work of the PPPB policy

The PPPB policy originated from the Teacher Quality Lab initiative under the GTP 1.0 (see Chapter 2, Section 2.4.4) which was established in 2009 and continued in the GTP 2.0 with a focus on improving access, strengthening quality and enhancing equity in education, which are, simultaneously, the three supporting principles behind the Blueprint (PEMANDU, 2010). The development of this policy began soon after the preliminary report for the Blueprint was released in 2012 with the establishment of a special committee led by the TED. The Education Performance and Delivery Unit (PADU), the monitoring agency under the Prime Minister's Office assigned the responsibility to the TED to establish a team of policymakers to develop the policy related to teacher CPD because the TED is the division responsible for matters concerning teacher professionalism. This team consisted of a consultant who is a Malaysian academic from a local university and 12 education officials from various divisions in the Ministry. The respective divisions selected the team members while the consultant was appointed by the TED and agreed by PADU. These were the policy

authors who were interviewed in the research through the collegial dialogue sessions. It is also important to note that, like any other educational policies, decisions are made by the central management authority which includes the Secretary-General of Education, the Director-General of Education and all the Directors of each division in the Ministry of Education (see Chapter 2, Figure 2.4).

The development of the PPPB policy involved various meetings, workshops and education dialogues with multiple stakeholders for almost 24 months before it was approved by the central committee. Based on the collegial dialogues with the policymakers, the policy development process started with brainstorming sessions and gathering of information related to teacher professional development. The policymakers, together with the consultant, having expertise in the field of teacher CPD began the process by reviewing local and international literature. The representative from PADU was always present to ensure that the policy was written coherently with the aims and objectives of the Blueprint. Some of the policymakers were sent to Singapore, Korea and Australia to benchmark and learn from these countries' best-practices on teacher CPD. Many of the strategies outlined in the policy were inspired by the neighbouring country, Singapore, given the assumed cultural similarities with Malaysia.

The process of writing the policy, however, was not straightforward and was discursive in nature. Due to the Ministry's highly-centralised administration system, the policymakers needed to continuously present the drafts of the policy to PADU before the central management authority approved it. When the policy was finalised, the TED conducted several dialogue sessions which included representatives from the teacher unions, principal alliances, the parents-teachers association and teachers to obtain feedback on the draft policy. Upon receiving the comments from these stakeholders, the team revised the policy accordingly, and the central management committee made the final decision.

As a result of these lengthy and multifaceted processes, the PPPB policy was finally released to the public towards the end of 2014. Following the release, the policymakers and education officials at the TED, SEO and DEO, as well as representatives from other divisions in the Ministry, conducted roadshows to further inform the education communities regarding the policy. The policy was also made available on the Ministry's website. The Ministry assumed that with the accessibility of the policy online, information would be within reach to all teachers and school leaders wherever their location. Numerous workshops were also held at the SEO and DEO offices to ensure school leaders received proper information concerning the policy and 'passing' it on to the teachers. This process reflected Model A of policymaking presented in Chapter 3 (see Section 3.2.1). Firstly, the directives to formulate the policy came from the authorities, down to the TED and was subjected to their approval. Secondly, the policy authors went through an iterative and lengthy process of developing the policy. They were closely monitored by the decision-makers who had identified problems in the system and the strategies to resolve these problems. Finally, assuming that the policy was well-designed, it was disseminated to the SEO and DEO before handing it down to the school leaders and teachers to be implemented.

The description of the PPPB policy is further elaborated in the following section.

5.2.3 The description of the PPPB policy

The policymakers claim that the PPPB policy was developed not as an entirely new policy, but it was written with a focus to compliment and strengthened other existing policies related to teacher professional development available in the system. The policy was also formulated as part of the strategies to achieve the objectives of Shift Four of the Blueprint (see Section 2.4.2) and is specifically written for teachers and school leaders. This is shown in the following quotation:

> We wrote the policy to enhance the earlier policies that we previously have in the system. The policy was developed in line with the objectives of the Blueprint because the Blueprint demands a change in teachers' way of teaching. We did it [the policy] to accommodate what is needed by the Blueprint (Policy Author D, 21/07/2016).

Figure 5.1: The cover page of the PPPB policy (Ministry of Education, 2014)

In describing the policy, the cover page of the PPPB policy (Figure 5.1 above) deserves clarification because it represents the aspiration of the transformation of teacher CPD in Malaysia. Based on the explanation provided in the policy text, the composition of cubes, arranged vertically, represent blocks of knowledge and skills. Ladders are placed at all levels of the cubes to signify teachers' continuous efforts in improving their professionalism through engagement with CPD (Ministry of Education, 2014: 1). A policy author noted that:

> The use of 'ladders' to depict the aspiration for the PPPB was suggested by the decision-makers (Policy Author B, 21/07/2016).

Generally, the use of this type of graphics, particularly on the front page in Malaysian education policies is uncommon, but since the release of the Blueprint, more policies are now presented in this fashion. Policy documents published before the current reform usually contain only texts (typically seen in teacher training manuals and teacher education textbooks). The use of pictures or diagrams is quite limited to non-existence. Often, policies were typically written as prescriptive statements that require the reader to be directly instructed to behave or think in certain manners (Scott, 2000). Usually, this is established through the use of authoritative language which empowers the author and disempowers the reader (ibid).

Next, the tenor of the written policy is consistent with what Scott, (2000) terms as a 'directed text' addressed to teachers and school leaders. "A 'directed text' focuses on the concerns of one group of actors or one part or level of the educational system" (ibid: 20). This document has an extensive focus on the suggestions and strategies for teachers and school leaders to address their professional development needs. However, there is no indication of specific CPD topics or activities that practitioners need to adhere to. What seems to be evident are the many CPD activities in which teachers can themselves determine and personalise based on their situation, preferences and needs (see Figure 5.2). This approach signals an attempt to make documents more user-friendly and to give readers more opportunity to explore other forms of professional learning. Brief details of CPD activities are included in the document (see Ministry of Education, 2014: 32-38). Policy authors in both collegial dialogues indicated that the reason for not providing a list of topics for teachers' CPD is to allow them to tailor the types of CPD to their individual needs. A comment by a policy author illustrates this:

> If we were to have a specific list, teachers may be confined to this list and limit the possibilities to explore other areas or field (Policy Author D, 21/07/2016).

The text assumes the availability of many CPD activities in which teachers can themselves determine and personalise based on their situation, preferences and needs (see Figure 5.2). This approach signals an attempt to make documents more user-friendly and to give readers more opportunity to explore other forms of professional learning. Brief details of CPD activities are included in the document (see Ministry of Education, 2014: 32-38). Policy authors in both collegial dialogues indicated that the reason for not providing a list of topics for teachers' CPD is to allow them to tailor the types of CPD to their individual needs. A comment by a policy author illustrates this:

> If we were to have a specific list, teachers may be confined to this list and limit the possibilities to explore other areas or field (Policy Author D, 21/07/2016).

List of CPD activities:

- Research
- Workshop
- Seminar
- Research
- e-teacher portal
- PLC
- Book review
- Publication
- Coaching & mentoring
- Benchmarking visit
- Courses
- Innovation
- Award-bearing

Figure 5.2: CPD activities (translated from Ministry of Education, 2014: 32)

The policy also assumes that there are many CPD activities available so that teachers can plan their own CPD programme, picking and choosing according to their own career objectives and professional interests. However, based on the focus group interview data, most of the participants mentioned that they continue to frequently engage in workshops and seminars conducted at their school despite knowing the availability of other forms of CPD. This signals the limits to the authors' imagination or understanding of the contexts and reality of teachers' CPD engagement.

It is also noted in the policy that teachers are expected to possess certain skills and competencies according to their career stages and the need to attend compulsory CPD (Ministry of Education, 2014: 23). This suggests that the policy is somewhere in the middle of the 'prescriptive'/'non-prescriptive' continuum. In this case, the readers of a prescriptive text are given limited freedom to interpret the policy in their own perception while non-prescriptive text is constructed to provide greater opportunity for readers to translate policy messages (ibid). In other words, the policy appears to inform teachers that they are allowed to regulate their own CPD, but at the same time, they must achieve the expected competencies as they progress in their career. These competencies then act as a form of control imposed upon the teaching profession by the Government. How confining they are, depends on how they are defined. Whether they are controlling depends on how they are measured and monitored. However, majority of the policy authors claimed that the text was developed in a way "…so that it does not limit them [teachers] in understanding and interpreting the policy" (Policy author E, 21/07/2016); indicating the intention was to give teachers more autonomy in making professional judgement.

Furthermore, the policy is made up of a total of 70 pages. It includes information on the aims and rationale for the transformation of CPD; the definition and expectations of the PPPB model of CPD; the process and procedures to partake in CPD and; a CPD kit containing

guidelines and examples on how to plan and execute individual CPD. In explaining this information to the target audience, there seems to be a balance between words and visual representations. There is a total of 22, colourful diagrams and tables presented in the policy document (see Ministry of Education, 2014: 15-56). The policymakers believe that this approach enables teachers to understand the text upon reading it and to ensure that intended messages are delivered effectively as the following comment by one of the authors shows:

> We wanted to come out with something that is easy for teachers to understand. We do not want teachers to read too many theories but do not know how to use them. He or she only needs to read it [the PPPB policy] once to understand it (Policy Author A, 21/07/2016).

In this regard, visual representations are used as a means to persuade teachers to embrace the changes that are expected of them. This approach, however, also indicates that the teachers are allowed little freedom to translate the policy from their own points of view. Teachers seem to be directly instructed to behave or think in certain ways that the policymakers deemed appropriate with the reform agenda. Nevertheless, even if teachers can interpret the policy text and make sense of the visual representations, this does not mean that the intention to change the specific setting or condition will contribute to the way the policy is received by teachers. In fact, the policy could be seen as not effective or partially effective because it includes information about how teachers should behave, and these behavioural prescriptions may be affected by the kind of support they obtained from the Ministry. To this extent, the policy text seems to assume a top-down structure where the policy flow is conceptualised in a straightforward manner. Put differently, the policy appears to be quite instructional in its style–similar to a manual.

5.2.4 The goal and core elements of the PPPB policy

Since the policy was formulated consistent with the aims and objectives of the Blueprint, the goal of the policy reflected the broader intention of elevating the position and status of teaching into a profession of choice (Ministry of Education, 2013: E-15). It was mentioned in Shift Four of the Blueprint that, among others, the present reform aims to:

1. Raise the entry bar for teachers from 2013 to be amongst the top 30 % of graduates;
2. Revamp the ITE;
3. Upgrade the quality of continuous professional development (CPD) from 2013;
4. Focus teachers on their core function of teaching from 2013;
5. Implement competency and performance-based career progression by 2016;
6. Enhance pathways for teachers into leadership, master teaching and subject specialist roles by 2016; and
7. Develop a peer-led culture of professional excellence and certification process by 2025.

(Ministry of Education, 2013: E-14 and E-17).

With such broad aims, the PPPB policy was developed to directly focus on the efforts of transforming teacher CPD practices (aims 3-7). The main goal of the policy is, therefore:

> To develop professional competence towards strengthening the aspired attributes so that teachers and school leaders can fulfil their roles and responsibilities more effectively and excel continuously. This is significant in the effort to create a holistic human capital parallel with the idea of the National Philosophy of Education (translated from Ministry of Education, 2014: 17).

From the description of the goal above, it could be inferred that the policy underscores the importance of CPD in developing teachers' competency following the professional standards set in the policy as a means to achieve a quality education. By using CPD as the mechanism to encourage teachers to improve their knowledge and practice continually, the policy expects teachers to contribute to a quality learning experience for students. This notion is also remarked by all the policy authors. For example, a policy author commented:

> If teachers participate in high quality CPD, this could lead to positive outcomes in student learning…that's why it is crucial for teachers to understand the intention of the policy (Policy Author A, 21/07/2016).

The policy authors in both collegial sessions also noted that this effort is not only in line with the NPE but is also consistent with other policies developed as part of the Blueprint so that students become skilled human capital who could contribute to the competitiveness of the country globally. Teachers are assumed to be individually responsible for student learning outcomes as a core ethical obligation. And so, since CPD contributes to improved student learning outcomes, participation in CPD is also an individual ethical responsibility as an autonomous professional. The comment below indicates this notion:

> We want our teachers to continuously learning and not only wait for the directives from the school or the Ministry to do so. We want this to change (Policy Author F, 21/07/2016).

In this regard, it is arguable that although the Ministry intends to change the ways teachers partake in CPD, the policy also recognises the need to alter teachers' attitudinal development as a means to shape their sense of professionalism. Thus, according to the policy

authors, the Ministry expects teachers in Malaysia to alter the culture of professional learning and engage more with collaborative and collegial forms of CPD other than the traditional CPD models.

> They should not be confined to a form of professional learning that is one-way. Teachers must learn to share their knowledge, learn from others and collaborate with other teachers (Policy Author B, 21/07/2016).

In brief, the policy assumes that through their engagement with CPD, teachers and school leaders will stay relevant as professional education practitioners, develop the capability to consistently and continuously improve themselves with the intention of upgrading the status of the teaching profession and at the same time work towards enhancing education quality matching to those of high-achieving countries as aspired in the Blueprint. Specifically, in the PPPB policy, CPD is understood as the intervention for teachers:

- To improve student learning outcomes to fulfil the labour market of the 21st-century;
- To gain new experience through the application of current knowledge and skills to improve work productivity and achievement that will maximise investment;
- To develop the competency, potential, talent and quality of teachers so that they are equalled with teachers in high-achieving countries in the field of education;
- To escalate the capacity of self-initiated learning and life-long learning to enable teachers to contribute continuously and effectively; and
- To fulfil self-satisfaction through improvement of professional image and career progression.

(translated from Ministry of Education, 2014: 25)

Looking closely at how CPD is conceptualised in the policy, it appears to be in tandem with the direction of education governance globally which is towards market-based education. CPD according to the policy, is viewed as an intervention that will assist in the production of quality human capital for the 21st-century labour market and the impacts of CPD are expected to match the amount of investment made in the professional development of teachers. Regarding professionalism, teachers are demanded to be of equal quality to those in high-performing countries in the international student assessment tests. In this vein, CPD in Malaysia is perceived as a mechanism to improve teacher quality similar to the notion promoted by the OECD. As discussed in Section 3.2.3, even with the dominance of the managerialist view to professionalism, the current trends in educational reform also indicate a growing shift towards democratic professionalism. Thus, The Ministry expects teachers in Malaysia to alter the culture of professional learning and engage more with collaborative and collegial forms of CPD other than the traditional CPD models.

The following section presents the analysis of the PPPB model of CPD to understand better how the Ministry plans to utilise CPD as a tool to transform teacher practice.

5.2.5 The PPPB model of CPD

As shown in Figure 5.3, the PPPB Model of CPD is depicted as comprising of three dimensions of competency, five attributes and six roles and responsibilities expected of teachers and school leaders. Through CPD intervention, teachers are assumed to begin their career from the bottom, as demonstrated in the three-dimensional cone, as implementers before moving up to be holistic thinkers. Teachers, along the way, will be prepared through their engagement in CPD, with a strong foundation of competencies namely professional values, knowledge and skills which were discussed in the former section.

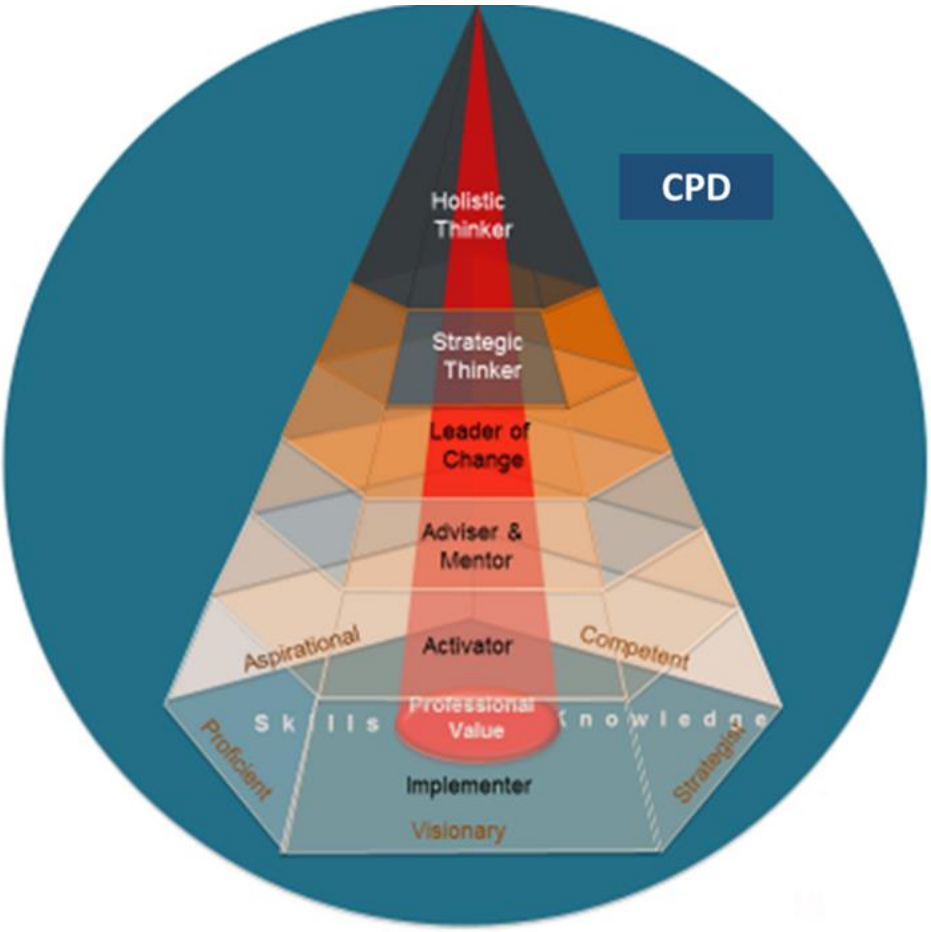


Figure 5.3: The PPPB Model of CPD (translated from Ministry of Education, 2014: 23)

The policy authors mentioned that this PPPB Model of CPD was developed based on the concept of 'growth-oriented training' which was originally targeted for educational leaders. According to Mohamad Yusof (2007: 4) who developed this model in Malaysia:

> The 'growth-oriented training' concept refers to the training that is focused on a clear career pathway and is recognised by the Public Service Department. This training is seen as a part of the requirement to achieve a higher career pathway which is sustainable and based on talent management through a continuous grooming process consistent with the concept of lifelong learning.

This concept illustrates the characteristics of teacher professionalism as of occupational status (see Section 3.3.2). The expertise of teachers in this regard is certified based on the training they have completed during their career to enable them to receive higher recognition from their employer, the Government.

Mohamad Yusof (2007) further elaborates that the concept is reinforced by the following three models of career development for the teaching profession (see Figures 5.4, 5.5 and 5.6):

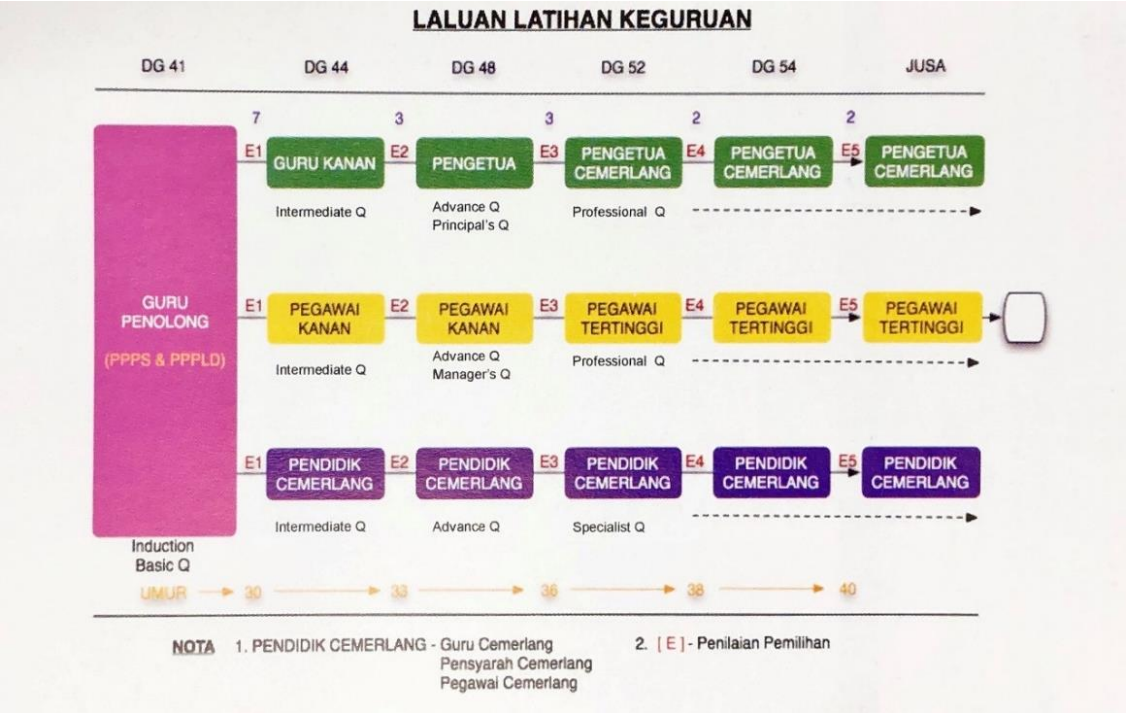


Figure 5.4: Teacher career pathway training model (Mohamad Yusof, 2007: 8)

Figure 5.5: Growth-oriented training model for educational leaders (Mohamad Yusof, 2007: 9)

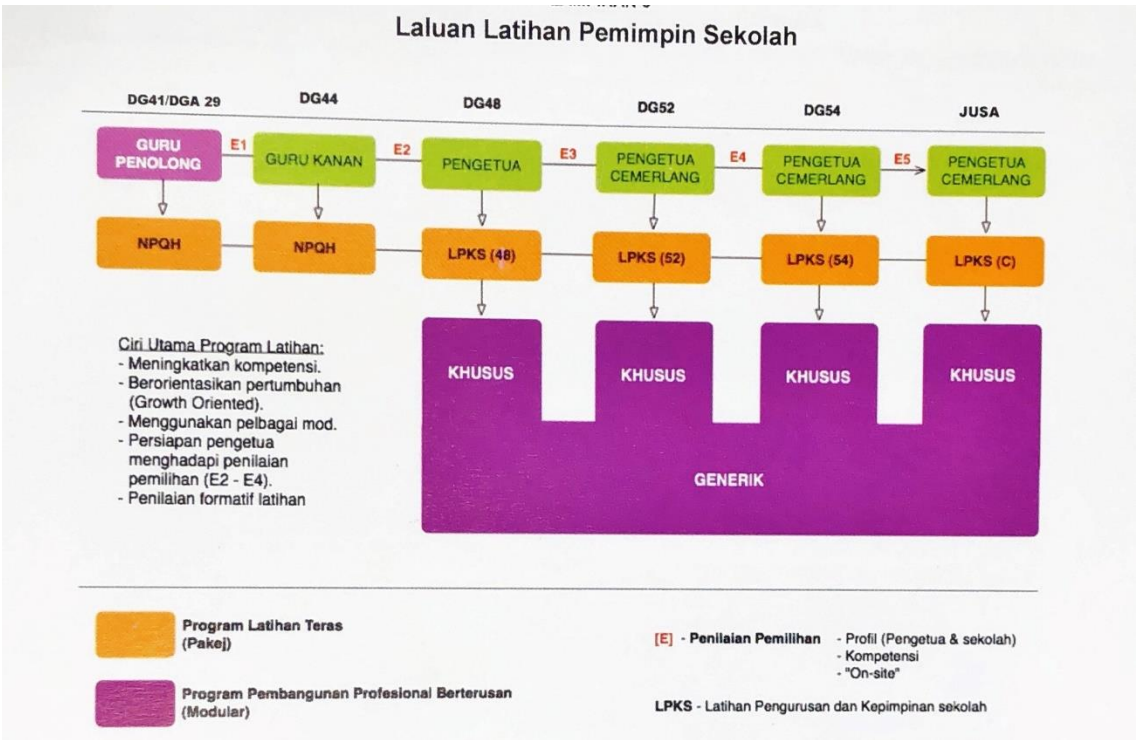


Figure 5.6: School leader career pathway training model (Mohamad Yusof, 2007: 10)

These three models focused greatly on the need for a school leader to undergo training suitable for their personal needs and the needs of the organisation. At the same time, these three models are seen as useful mechanisms to identify school leaders' competencies and match them with training that is more likely appropriate with their grade level and professionalism. As shown in Figures 5.3 and 5.5, teachers and school leaders are visualised as continuously improving themselves as they progress up the career ladder. The selection of the diagram in the form of a pyramid seems to imply the hierarchy that exists in the teaching profession. Paradoxically, the models also indicate that as teachers and school leaders progress in their profession, there will be less opportunity for teachers and school leaders to be in a higher position. In this respect, the PPPB Model of CPD seems to portray the teaching profession as consisting of more 'implementers' as compared to 'holistic thinkers'.

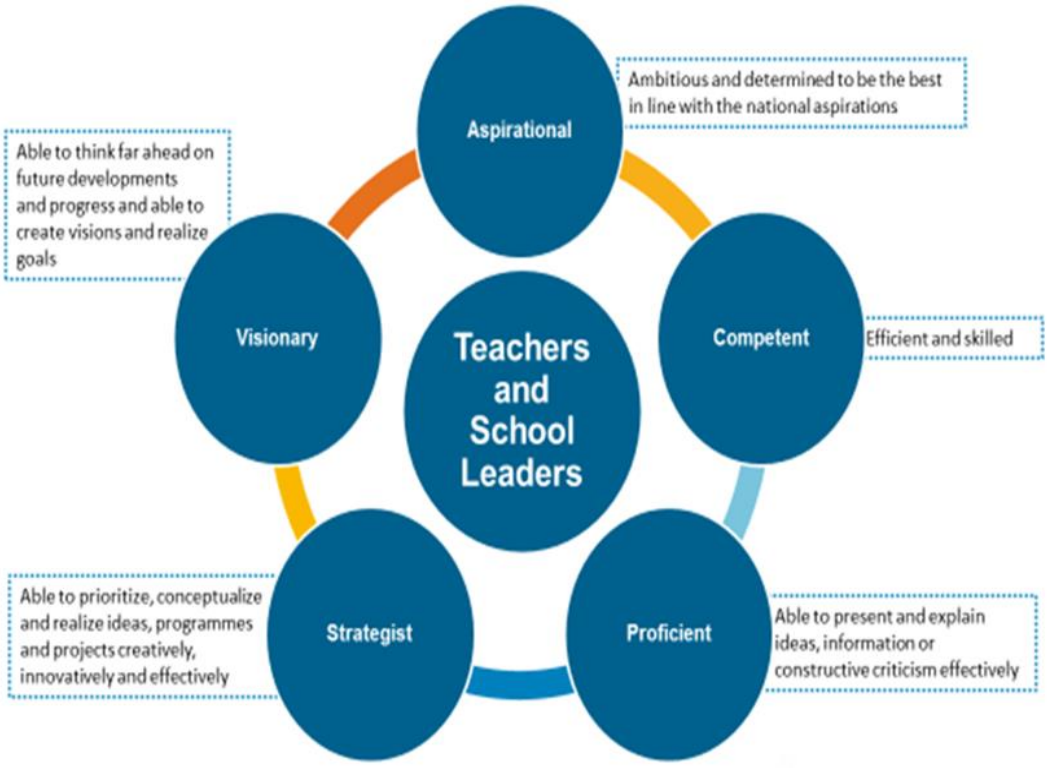


Figure 5.7: Attributes expected of teachers and school leaders (translated from Ministry of Education, 2014: 20)

The Ministry further argues that an 'ideal' teacher must possess five attributes, namely; aspirational, competent, proficient, strategist and visionary (Ministry of Education, 2014: 20). The detailed explanation of each attribute is illustrated in Figure 5.7. Further, it is presumed that by possessing these attributes, teachers will be capable in doing their job to the best of their ability along with their participation in CPD activities appropriate for their existing roles and responsibilities. Through CPD intervention, the Ministry believes that teachers will develop and mature into greater individuals; will be able to warrant effective classroom teaching and learning and eventually, contribute towards better student outcomes.

No.	Roles and responsibilities	Expected tasks
1	holistic thinker	Able to think holistically and solve problems creatively and innovatively; strategist and visionary; possess knowledge in various fields and pedagogical skills; consultant to teachers and other school leaders
3	leader of change	Lead and motivate pedagogical innovations; evaluate research for improvement in classroom teaching; lead strategic collaboration; lead and manage change; mentor and guide peers to innovate and improve institutional excellence.
4	adviser and mentor	Mentor peers in pedagogical aspects; guide peers in conducting research; become role models; motivate effective practice; facilitate CPD; encourage, monitor and evaluate teaching and learning.
5	activator	Inspire and motivate peers; conduct knowledge sharing sessions; initiate professional inquiry; encourage the achievement of quality, vision and mission of education.
6	implementer	Implement effective teaching and learning; embrace professional values; work collaboratively; conduct action research.

Table 5.1: The expected shift in the roles and responsibilities of school leaders and teachers (translated from Ministry of Education, 2014: 21)

Furthermore, as these attributes are adapted based on the 'growth-oriented training' model for educational leaders (see Figure 5.5), the Ministry appears to be emphasising 'teacher leadership' in the teaching profession. This intention is further highlighted by the list of roles and responsibilities they must fulfil as teachers (see Table 5.1). Based on the interview with the former Director-General of Education, the 'growth-oriented training' model was designed to provide suitable training for educational leaders parallel with their career progression, roles and responsibilities. When he developed the model, he was the Director of the Educational Leadership and Management Institute (IAB). The policy authors mentioned that they adapted and developed his vision into the PPPB Model of CPD. Thus, it is not surprising to see elements of leadership in the demands for teachers to transform their professionalism.

The Ministry assumes that at each level, teachers should already acquire the expected competencies and attributes that are appropriate for their prevailing roles and responsibilities. It is in this circumstance that the Ministry demands teachers to engage with CPD which is more likely to enhance their existing potential. Additionally, it is mentioned in the policy document that teachers' CPD will be ongoing during their tenure of service and will occur in two phases: the beginning phase and the capacity building and expertise phase. The Ministry considers a teacher's experience in the beginning stages of teaching as pivotal for the development of the skills and knowledge they learned during initial teacher education. Indeed, their experiences during this period may influence their future attitudes towards the profession. (Ministry of Education, 2014). During this phase, teachers are mandated to attend CPD that will help them familiarise themselves with actual classroom situations and assimilate themselves into the school culture (climate and ethos), such as an induction programme. In the capacity building and expertise phase, on the other hand, as teachers become

more experienced, they are expected to engage with CPD relevant to their existing roles and responsibilities.

In short, the PPPB Model of CPD was developed based on the growth-oriented training model. The Ministry seems to direct teacher professionalism towards improvement and preparing teachers for change and growth through professional development. In this way, teachers could focus on developing high quality learning and teaching in the classroom through professional collaboration and developing their leadership skills and capabilities as "a form of agency; where teachers seem to be empowered to lead development work that impacts directly upon the quality of teaching and learning" (Ali and Rizvi, 2007: 14). A career pathway is used as the motivation to encourage teachers' growth while the list of competencies, attributes, roles and responsibilities are seen as guidelines for how the teaching profession should look like. In other words, teacher professionalism in Malaysia is more likely to be directed towards the collaborative-activist dimension (see Section 3.3.3).

Nonetheless, the policy text displays a writing style that is somewhat directive and authoritarian but the PPPB model of CPD assumed increased professional autonomy with experience. At the same time, the policy devolves responsibility for CPD to the individual level. In some ways, the policy seems to reflect Kennedy's (2014: 693) depiction of the "increasing capacity for professional autonomy and teacher agency" that occurs when teachers move from transmissive CPD to the transformative forms of CPD (see Chapter 3, Table 3.2). Therefore, this implies that by promoting engagement with transformative CPD, the Ministry is indirectly shaping teacher professionalism towards democratic professionalism in which teachers are accorded with the choice to regulate their own professional growth and to work individually and collaboratively towards their own ongoing improvement (Sachs, 2016).

5.2.6 The implementation strategies for the PPPB model of CPD

Figure 5.8: Conceptual framework of the implementation strategies (translated and adapted from the Ministry of Education, 2014: 26)

Figure 5.8 illustrates the simplified version of the guidelines regarding the implementation of the policy. Teachers are expected to implement the policy by changing the way they participate in CPD. Teachers are expected to begin this change by doing their Own Training Needs Analysis (TNA) which could be performed through personal reflection, analysis of competencies (for example the UI), feedback from senior teachers, school leaders and peers and other TNA instruments (Ministry of Education, 2014). Based on the TNA, teachers then engage with self-initiated CPD and Ministry-led CPD. Through the teachers' active participation in the CPD activities, the Ministry

assumes that there will be an improvement in their competency and their teaching and learning quality. Ultimately, an anticipated outcome of this implementation is, with higher teaching quality whereby students will be afforded better learning experiences. The way the implementation process is described in the policy document indicates that the process of policy is portrayed as being relatively straightforward and consistent with Model A (see Section 3.2.1). Figure 5.8 reinforces the notion that policy statements are intended to be strictly followed and adhered to by implementers, so that specific changes occur effectively.

However, the brief description of the implementation strategies in the policy document also implies that teachers are expected to interpret and translate the strategies themselves. As a general description, it appears to be that it is unlikely for the Ministry to restrict the methods and teachers appear to be allocated the freedom on how they wish to implement the policy at the school level. Moreover, the choice of words used in the policy does not indicate exigency or the obligation for teachers to follow the implementation guidelines strictly. For example, the word '*harus/wajib'* (must) which is often used in policy documents to highlight the need for adherence to mandated directives, is only repeated[4] seven times in the entire text.

The analysis of policy actors' roles and responsibilities further emphasises the assumption that the policy is prescriptive and directive. As part of the implementation guidelines, their roles and responsibilities are stated in the policy document as shown in Table 5.2 below. There are only five roles of teachers and school leaders listed by the Ministry to ensure successful implementation of the policy. These roles are written using simple and straightforward language, informing teachers and school leaders to plan, attend and record their engagement in CPD and to share what they gained through the

[4] The occurrences of these words were computed using the 'find' function in the MAXQDA software.

activities with their colleagues. Further examination of the policy document also showed that other guidelines on how to plan CPD, how to partake in CPD and examples on how to document their participation are manifested in the policy document (Ministry of Education, 2014: 29-31). Put differently, these guidelines appear to indirectly provide teachers with a manual on the kind of professionalism that the Ministry believes best fit the teaching profession.

Policy Actors	**Roles**
Head of Department	1. Plan organisational CPD needs based on the need of the organisation. 2. Ensure teachers and school leaders attend CPD activities a minimum of seven days a year. 3. Ensure teachers and school leaders attend CPD initiated by the organisation. 4. Give permission and verify teachers and school leaders' participation in CPD activities. 5. Record attendance in CPD organised by the respective organisation in SPLKPM. 6. Conduct CPD programme evaluation. 7. Perform other relevant professional responsibilities.
Teachers and School Leaders	1. Plan individual CPD. 2. Attend compulsory and elective CPD. 3. Record attendance in elective, self-initiated CPD in SPLKPM. 4. Prepare CPD portfolio (optional). 5. Conduct knowledge sharing and best practices session with members of the organisation.

Table 5.2: Head of departments, teachers and school leaders' roles in the implementation of the PPPB policy (translated from Ministry of Education, 2014: 39)

Another important detail about the policy implementation guidelines that is worth noting at this point are the different types of CPD needs that the Ministry expects teachers to fulfil (see Table 5.3).

Albeit the PPPB policy's emphasis is towards encouraging teachers to engage more in self-initiated and individual CPD, at the same time, they are still compelled to participate in school-based and Ministry-led CPD. In other words, teachers are urged to be autonomous professionals but, simultaneously their CPD needs remained to be determined by external experts. Interestingly, it is like telling teachers that they are given the freedom of choice, but it is limited and circumstantial. This typology of needs reflects significantly on the characteristics of the formal and transmissive model of CPD discussed in Chapter 3 (see Transmissive versus transformative CPD) indicating that teachers are still constrained to adhere to controlled-compliant professionalism despite the encouragement for teachers to regulate their own professional learning. In this respect, Kennedy (2014: 694) affirms that teachers would still need to partake in the traditional form of CPD because:

> …some skills may well be best learned or refreshed through more transmissive approaches to learning. This idea leads us naturally to consider not only the individual CPD models or experiences but the broader policies within which these experiences are situated.

By acknowledging the need for teachers to engage with transmissive models of CPD, to some extent, this implies that the Ministry would still wish to maintain control over the teaching workforce, particularly in ensuring teachers' compliance with the reform agenda.

Self-Initiated CPD	Individual CPD	School-Based CPD	MOE-Organized CPD
Initiatives taken by teachers or school leaders to improve professionalism.	Teachers engage in CPD activities on their own initiative and choice to improve student learning.	CPD activities organised by a school and nearby schools based on student learning and pedagogical needs.	CPD designed and implemented based on teachers' basic needs and specific requirements by the MOE.
These initiatives can be undertaken by the school based on the needs of teachers and their school.	This self-directed learning is to cultivate and provide autonomous CPD driven by self-planning, self-regulation, self-evaluation and self-improvement.	Head teachers have the autonomy and accountability for the activities conducted.	This initiative could also be implemented collaboratively with other organizations.

Table 5.3: Types of CPD needs (translated and adapted from the Ministry of Education, 2014: 27 – 28)

Looking back at Figure 5.8, the requirement for teachers to identify their own professional development needs indicated the Ministry's attempt to shift the responsibility to engage with CPD and perhaps employ more agency to the teachers, encouraging them to embrace democratic professionalism (Sachs, 2003; Kennedy, 2007). This shift, while it is portrayed starting from the bottom chain of the policy implementation process, it is still portrayed as being linear and reasonably straightforward. The assumption being, that if teachers participate in CPD and fulfil individual and institutional needs, there will be an improvement in terms of teachers' skills and competencies which will then result in better student learning outcomes as defined by the Blueprint. This perspective is consistent with the view of a top-down, centralised CPD system which expects practitioners to implement CPD policy as to how the policymakers intend it which will eventually contribute to quality teaching (Sabatier, 1986; Honig, 2004). However,

what seems to be absent from the implementation strategies is the Ministry's awareness of the existence of other variables which is dependent on the way teachers have interpreted and understood the policy and the extent to which it is implemented or accepted at the school level (Matland, 1995; Wedell, 2009). Thus, the complicity with top-down hierarchy and the limitations accepted to the agency at every level of the system remained questionable in such a policy implementation manner and approach (Scott, 2000).

In the next section, I discuss the motivations and justifications for the CPD policy reform in Malaysia to further understand the origins and nature of the PPPB policy.

5.3 Influences on the nature and development of the PPPB policy

As the pressures to improve the quality of education systems intensify and grow, educational policymaking internationally has become increasingly crucial as educational policies are not developed in isolation. Often, the sense of urgency to resolve a pressing issue or problem is an important dimension of policy formation. As mentioned earlier, the PPPB policy was formulated as part of the ongoing effort by the Ministry to improve teacher and teaching quality in particular, and education quality in general as teachers are viewed as an important determinant for quality human capital (see Section 5.2.1). In the interviews, policy authors and key personnel referred to local and international influence on the direction of education reform at the level of the Blueprint. However, little was said about the PPPB document. The influences tend to be attributed to the impetus for education reform which may have suggested a general direction for reform but did not necessarily inform the policymakers on a day to day basis when they were hammering out the text.

5.3.1 Malaysia's achievement in international student performance tests

The growing interest and attention towards international student performance studies have increasingly influenced education policy (Chung, 2016). Analysis of the relevant policy documents, in particular, the Blueprint indicates clearly that the present education reform in Malaysia is very much influenced by the results of international student achievement studies such as PISA and TIMSS. The outcomes of these tests have driven reform and traces of policy borrowing are evident in the formulation of education policies such as the PPPB. Through the Blueprint, the Ministry has drawn and developed policies and strategies to improve the quality of the Malaysian education system. It is clearly stipulated in the Blueprint that students' performance in international assessments help shape the initiatives and strategies for the nation's educational transformation (Ministry of Education, 2013). As recalled in earlier chapters, the PPPB policy is one of the many strategies that stem from the Blueprint, and it was partly developed to improve students' performance in the tests mentioned (see Chapter 1, Section 1.1). One of the policy authors asserted:

> In order to improve the [TIMSS and PISA] results, we need to realign the focus. We hope with the PPPB, we will be able to help teachers with CPD and in the end, improve student learning (Policy author E, 21/07/2016).

In this vein, Malaysia's first participation in the OECD's PISA study was a year after the 2009 cycle started, but the results of PISA 2012 were highlighted by all major Malaysian newspapers in December 2013 for being ranked 52 out of 65 countries and being in the third bottom group continuously. Similarly, although Malaysia participated in TIMSS since 1999, the 2011 cycle received the most attention from politicians, education communities, the general public and the media. Malaysia was benchmarked 22nd out of 38 countries in 1999, ranked

20th out of 50 countries in TIMSS 2003, and positioned 21st out of 60 countries in TIMSS in 2007. In 2011, Malaysia was ranked 32nd out of 45 countries, and students' Science score level was 500 which is categorised as low and below the TIMSS average (Ministry of Education, 2013).

The prevalent concern for educators and other stakeholders was that student performance in both tests showed a downward, spiralling trend. Based on TIMSS 2011, "up to 38 % of Malaysian students did not meet the minimum standards in Mathematics and Science, approximately a twofold increase since 2007, and up to five times what it previously was in 1999" (Ministry of Education, 2013: 3-8). Similarly, in PISA 2009+, more than 50 % of Malaysian students were unable to attain the lowest standards in Mathematics thereby showing their inability to use basic Mathematical concepts. In the Science subject, 43 % of students did not achieved the minimum proficiency levels, implying students limited ability to relate or apply scientific knowledge in daily situations (Ministry of Education, 2013). Additionally, 44 % of the students scored below the minimum standards in the reading test signifying their inability to extract main ideas of the reading text and associate it with common everyday knowledge (Ministry of Education, 2013). The results of PISA 2012 added to a more intense concern over students' achievement as it is not only below the OECD average, but there was an alarming deterioration in performance as compared to the previous cycle (Ministry of Education, 2013).

5.3.2 Issues on the quality of teachers and teaching in Malaysia

As a consequence of the unsatisfactory performance in the TIMSS and PISA tests, Malaysia is depicted by the media as being outperformed by other Asian countries like Japan, Shanghai, Hongkong, South Korea and most notably, the neighbouring country, Singapore. This "representation of standardised test scores" has led to a discourse of derision around teachers which "are used to promote

particular political discourses about the quality of education" (Stack and Boler, 2007: 3). In relation to the TIMSS and PISA results, through the media, representatives from parent associations raised their concern over teacher quality in Malaysia. For example:

> They should be trained professionally as the current training is not sufficient in producing good quality teachers (Congress of Teachers Union of Malaysia) (Lim, March 17, 2014).
>
> The decline in teaching quality coincided with the relaxing of entry requirements at training colleges. We need to upgrade teachers' training. But I suspect the growing numbers of teachers, people taken to do teaching, are from unemployable graduates. You do not get the best graduates (Concerned Parents of Selangor (CPS) (Yap, May 15, 2015).
>
> The low quality of local teachers is attributed to their lack of passion and attitude. Teachers were not selected based on merit, resulting in mediocrity. Again, the quality of our teachers. They do not commit and are not academically progressive. It hinders our progress (Malacca Action Group for Parents in Education (MAGPIE) (Yap, May 15, 2015).

These concerns, however, should not be attributed merely to the results of international student tests. Studies by local scholars generally found that many teachers in Malaysia still use conventional teacher-centred approaches (Tan and Arshad, 2011; Salleh and Aziz, 2012). Abu Hassan (2003) and Lim (2007) argue that due to teachers' perception that their main role is to deliver curriculum content, they tend to employ teacher-centred learning in classroom lessons resulting to students' passive involvement. Tan and Arshad (2014) in their more recent study on problem-based learning methods found that it is still an uncommon instructional strategy in Malaysian schools and teachers need to develop the skills to facilitate higher-order thinking skills in Science classrooms. Therefore, there is an increasing need for teachers to be competent in teaching high-order thinking skills due to the

growing ‘focus on core subjects in the curriculum' such as literacy and numeracy (see Chapter 3, Section 3.2.2) which are tested in the TIMSS and PISA tests.

Also, the public’s concern and research clearly pointed to the issue on teachers' pedagogical skills and the need for teachers to discard traditional methods and learn alternative instructional strategies that seem to fit the demands of education nowadays. Research elsewhere shows that the quality of instructions which encompasses elements such as effective questioning and the use of assessments by teachers contributes to teaching effectiveness (Hattie, 2009; Coe et al., 2014). Research in other countries has found encouraging connections between the quality of teachers and student achievement and teacher learning with student outcomes (Darling-Hammond et al., 2005; Rivkin et al., 2005; OECD, 2005; 2009). Consistent with the findings from the literature on teacher quality, it is stated in the PPPB policy that:

> Competent and quality teachers and school leaders are the determining factors in students' success. Competent teachers will improve the quality of learning while competent school leaders will be able to facilitate learning by promoting a conducive learning environment and guide teachers to improve student learning. Teachers and school leaders’ competency and quality can be enhanced through involvement in formal and informal CPD activities (translated from the Ministry of Education, 2014: 14).

The notion of professionalism the literature above generally adopts is democratic professionalism in which teachers reflect on their own teaching and work on ways to ‘fix’ or improve their weaknesses through the process of self-discovery. In other words, the literature suggests that it is necessary for the education system to shift teachers’ mindsets; teachers should now ‘become learners of their own teaching’ (Hattie, 2009) and be responsible for their own professional growth. The PPPB policy seems to be shaping teachers towards this direction,

but little information on how to achieve the goal is provided in the text. As mentioned in Chapter 3 (see Professionalism as part of the systemic context), to change the teacher learning culture, first and foremost, it requires the consideration of the entire CPD system (Kennedy, 2014).

Furthermore, the formulation of the PPPB policy is not solely motivated by the challenges that the country is facing at 'home', but it has been influenced by the ongoing and increasing concern over the direction of education internationally. The teaching profession specifically, according to Sorenson and Robertson (2017), has the focus of international political debates for many years ranging from the issues on teachers' working conditions, professionalism, the quality of teaching instructions and to at present, the reframing of teachers' work for global competitiveness. Kennedy (2014), on the contrary, sees that overriding global education governance is continually advocating positive teacher learning culture which is fundamental to student learning. This, however, has led to some governments turning to the principles of neoliberalism, moving towards "instrumental, managerial approaches to 'measurement' where pupil performance in standardised tests is used as a proxy for teacher quality, as opposed to the more broad-based and varied range of areas" (Kennedy, 2014: 691). To this end, international agencies such as the OECD has used its power and dominance in framing, branding and selling a specific conception of teacher quality (Sorenson and Robertson, 2017). Having subscribed to the indicator-based data-sets namely PISA and TALIS, Malaysia appears to have endorsed the Quality Teacher™ brand marketed by the OECD. Certain strategies to transform the teaching profession made by the Ministry are rationalised using recommendations by the OECD. A policy author said:

> When we presented the draft of the PPPB policy to the decision makers, we were asked to look at TALIS results and CPD in Singapore. From this point

> onwards, most of our work is based on that (Policy author F, 21/07/2016).

Malaysia seems to reference recommendations promoted by the OECD in developing the policies related to teachers. Furthermore, the Ministry appears to perceive that teacher quality influences student performance and to improve student learning, interventions such as CPD is much needed (OECD 2005, Mourshed et al. 2010). Therefore, to improve students' learning outcome, CPD is perceived by the Ministry as a mechanism that will contribute to improvement in teacher and teaching quality. The justification to demand change in teachers' CPD practice, however, was also influenced by the pressure to improve the country's ranking in global league tables which has resulted in policy borrowing to be a significant component in the construction of the PPPB policy.

5.3.3 Learning 'best practices' from high-performing countries

Results of comparative studies have generated the categorisation of educational systems in the form of league tables, which in turn, pressure governments to learn from experiences in other countries, thus contributing to the motivation to borrow policies from all over the world. In comparative education literature, some advocates of policy borrowing, for example, the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) and the OECD use standardised comparisons to locate policies from high-performing systems that can be learned or transferred, to identify indicators for global benchmarks (Steiner-Khamsi, 2014) and increasingly defining educational aims (Dale and Robertson, 2002). Many of the references documented in both the elaboration of Shift Four initiatives in the Blueprint and the PPPB policy itself are taken from countries like Finland, Singapore, South Korea and Japan that are recognised as high-performing countries due to their excellent achievement in international student tests. For examples:

> Countries like Finland, Australia, the United States, United Kingdom, South Korea, and Japan place greater emphasis on self-regulated CPD that considers both individual and school needs (Ministry of Education, 2014: 15).

> …several of the world's top-performing school systems, such as Singapore and South Korea, have demonstrated that it is possible for a system to go from poor to great performance within a few decades (Ministry of Education, 2013: 2 – 3).

An author of the PPPB policy in the interview explaining the rationale for the new policy for teacher CPD mentioned that:

> We use the tagline "*guru bertaraf antarabangsa*" (teacher of international standards) …one of the reason for referring to international publications like TALIS report so that we are at par and relevant globally (Policy author A, 21/07/2016).

Other policy authors often cited examples of best practices in high-performing countries as a means to justify the need for a new direction in teacher CPD.

> We went to NIE [the National Institute of Education], Singapore to get first-hand information on how they do CPD for teachers (Policy author C, 21/07/2016).

> My visit to Australia gave me insights on how teachers over there do collaborative meetings or discussions voluntarily (Policy author D, 21/07/2016).

Although the Ministry mentioned that the initiatives and strategies in the Blueprint are designed with a specific focus to place Malaysia among the top third group within a 15 years' timeframe (Ministry of Education, 2013), it appeared to have been borrowing policy recommendations from influential publications and high-performing education systems. In this case, it cannot simply be assumed that the bureaucrats simply transfer best practices in foreign

lands into the Malaysian education landscape. Rather, it has been widely recognised that the actual process is complicated and does not always follow the common policy borrowing cycle (Chung, 2016). While the PPPB policy authors' responses seem to indicate that their decisions may have been tempted by the best practices in which they learned in other countries, their decisions yield to 'quick fix' and 'phoney' solutions (Phillips and Ochs 2004: 779). Although, it is evident from the interviews with them that a reasonable amount of hard work has been invested in developing the policy (see Section 5.2.2). Furthermore, it was noted previously that the policy took almost two years to complete due to the countless drafts, high frequencies of meetings, workshops and consultations with various stakeholders as well as back and forth monitoring by PADU, the agency designated to monitor education initiatives outlined in the Blueprint.

Also, as stated in the elaboration about the PPPB Model of CPD, the present professional development model actually originated from the 'growth-oriented training' model developed by the former Director-General of Education (see Section 5.2.5). This is an indication that despite the pressure to learn from high-performing education systems, there is still a need to understand the dynamic local and global influences as part of the CPD policy formulation process (see Chapter 3, Section 3.2.3). Also, it took longer for the policy to be released because the highly-centralised education structure requires the policy to be approved by the top-level actors, implying the multifaceted nature of policymaking (Haddad, 1995) and it is not the case where foreign policies are simply borrowed and implemented without informed decisions.

5.4 Conclusion

The chapter has described the presentation and content of the PPPB policy. Further, it presents findings from the analysis of collegial dialogues with my co-authors on the paper. It was revealed that the

development of the policy was largely attributed to the wider agenda of education reform along with the strategy to produce quality human capital through the improvement of education quality. The policy which is dedicated specifically to teachers and school leaders appears to have outlined the rationale and the guidelines necessary for them to change the way they engage with CPD. The analysis indicates that through the promotion of self-initiated CPD, the policy seems to emphasise the notion of 'teacher leadership' and 'teachers as learners', guiding them towards collaborative-activist professionalism. The formulation of the policy has involved complex processes and has been motivated by both local and international influences. Among others, policy formation is justified by the aspiration to improve the nation's ranking in global league tables which have led to the pressure to learn best practices or borrow educational policies related to teacher professional development, particularly from high-performing countries. These efforts by the Government have also led to the reference and endorsement of policy recommendations from influential international agencies in the pursuit of quality teachers and quality teaching. Nevertheless, despite this notion, traces of local adaptation to the policy was also evident in the PPPB model of CPD.

The following chapter focuses on teachers' perceptions of the policy and its initial implementation as a means to understand how the new CPD model affects their professional learning and their sense of professionalism.

Chapter 6
The Initial Implementation of the PPPB Policy

6.1 Introduction

The primary motivation and intent of this study were to shed light on the development and initial implementation of the PPPB policy and to investigate how teachers experience and perceive the changing CPD process and expectations. Within this broad aim, this chapter focuses on teachers' perceptions of their engagement with CPD and explores the rationale for the kind of CPD they subscribe to. This chapter is organised into two sections. The first section deals with teachers' views and their experiences in implementing the PPPB policy. Then, by focusing in more depth through the lens of three teachers, the chapter concentrates on their CPD engagement and what they convey regarding their experiences and the impact that CPD has had on their professionalism. This analysis is discussed in the second section of this chapter. Finally, this chapter concludes with a summary of the main themes and important arguments that are discussed in the next chapter.

6.2 Emerging themes

At the outset, the task of categorising the main themes was challenging given there was significant overlap between the issues that started to emerge from conducting the focus group interviews with teachers from the three schools. Nevertheless, after much consideration, they were grouped into two core themes: teachers' experiences in implementing the policy and the influences affecting the implementation of the policy. This categorisation facilitated the analysis, allowing for better exploration of the complex and interrelated topics which surfaced during the interviews. In the focus group interviews, teachers commented on what they understood CPD to be and their professional learning practice before and after the

introduction of the policy. This was to obtain a general idea about their views of CPD and the ways they engaged with CPD during these periods. The teachers' responses were beneficial in understanding their views on the various issues regarding the implementation of the policy. Additionally, the contextual details of the teachers involved in this process are also included in this chapter in order to facilitate the understanding of the contexts.

Next, the analysis of data gathered from the individual interviews with Siti, Suri and Rina (the three teachers) are presented recounting their perceptions regarding the impact of the policy on their engagement with CPD and their professional practice. The in-depth interviews provided detailed perceptions, opinions, beliefs, and attitudes of each teacher in a specified context, offering a complete picture of the reality of their CPD experience and the implementation of the policy. These findings are organised around the main themes arising from the individual interviews.

6.3 Contextual details of strand II participants

Table 6.1 below displays the additional contextual details of the participants. All participants involved are female, and the schools chosen are located in the Petaling Perdana District, Selangor.

	School/Date of Interview	Interviewee Code	Teaching Experience (years)
Focus Group Interviews	**A 16/07/2016**	Teacher 1	15
		Teacher 2	10
		Teacher 3	16
		Teacher 4	12
	B 15/07/2016	Teacher 5	5
		Teacher 6	8
		Teacher 7	18
		Teacher 8	9
	C 14/7/2016	Teacher 9	28
		Teacher 10	20
		Teacher 11	16
		Teacher 12	10
Individual Interviews	**A 18, 19, 27/07/2016**	Siti	15
	B 26/07/2016 02/08/2016	Rina	5
	C 20, 21, 25/07/2016	Suri	28

Table 6.1: Details of the focus group and individual interviews

6.4 Teachers' experiences in implementing the PPPB policy

At the beginning of the focus group interviews, the teachers' spoke about their perceptions and engagement with CPD before the policy was introduced and following its implementation. Obtaining a general idea of the teachers' experiences with CPD during these phases

also provided a better understanding of their views and concerns related to the implementation of the policy.

6.4.1 Teachers' understanding of CPD

The analysis of teachers' responses from the focus group interviews also brings attention to several important themes in the way in which they defined CPD. The majority of teachers defined CPD as a means to improve the teachers' knowledge, competencies, pedagogical skills and professionalism through various methods or activities.

CPD as a formal and an informal activity

As stated by teachers, the following exemplifies the methods through which CPD could be achieved:

> School-based workshop and seminar (Teacher 4, School A)
>
> In-service training (Teacher 10, School C)
>
> A must activity (Teacher 10, School B)
>
> Discussion with teachers from other schools via WhatsApp group (Teacher 8, School B)
>
> Strategies to improve teaching skills (Teacher 6, School B)
>
> Ways to learn and develop professionally (Teacher 12, School C)
>
> Learning to be kept informed about education updates (Teacher 4, School A)

These quotes reveal that some of the teachers tend to narrow their perceptions of CPD to in-service courses while others noted that CPD could involve in any informal activities or experiences to improve their pedagogical skills. Two focus groups suggested that the formal forms of CPD provided them with a clear sense of direction in their

professional development. Accordingly, teachers receive a certificate to verify their attendance in the activities. Such evidence is useful for their annual appraisal and career development. In other words, Ministry-led, formal courses seemed to satisfy teachers and provide them with a sense of security and confidence in their teaching profession, indicating elements of controlled-compliant professionalism. The notion that CPD is a mandated activity for all civil servants and had been regulated by the Ministry before the implementation of the PPPB policy may have also contributed to the reason why some teachers perceive it as a formal activity (see Chapter 2, Section 2.5). A teacher commented that she participated in CPD activities organised by the school only because it was made compulsory, and she had no choice but to attend, which made her feel coerced when undertaking professional development, as she mentioned:

> I don't think I have the autonomy to decide. I still need to attend CPD even if I don't want to (Teacher 9, School C).

However, teachers with less than ten years' experience tended to view CPD as a form of learning. This group of teachers may have had more significant exposure to more recent forms of CPD during their initial teacher education period as compared to teachers who had been in the profession exceeding ten years with less variability in CPD.

CPD as skills and self-development

Across the three focus groups, three key terms characterised the rationale for teachers to engage with CPD. The terms 'change', 'improve' and 'develop' were consistently[5] mentioned in the interview transcripts indicating their views on the importance of CPD as an

[5] The occurrences of these words were computed using the 'find' function in the MAXQDA software.

essential element in their professional work. According to the teachers, these terms relate to the general purpose for doing CPD. Among others, they noted that the main reasons for them engaging with CPD were to strengthen their pedagogical practices in order to benefit their students, to keep themselves abreast with the latest information on education and as a way for them to perform in their work as a better teacher. While many teachers highlighted their motivation to engage with CPD to improve and develop their pedagogical skills, other teachers cited CPD as a means to revitalise themselves and gain more confidence and exposure in teaching. Several teachers, however, noted CPD as a way to refresh their motivation and enthusiasm to facilitate teaching more effectively when they returned to their classrooms. A teacher shared her apprehension, saying that:

> Doing CPD keeps me enthusiastic in doing my job. I don't want to rely on old information or teaching methods. CPD keeps me in touch with the latest techniques, and I am more confident in teaching if I am sure I'm using the current best practices (Teacher 11, School C).

CPD as a continuing process

One of the focus groups discussed CPD as an ongoing and continuous process. In fact, one teacher justified that CPD is a continual process because teachers "need to be able to teach to the present needs of students and to be able to do this effectively, teachers must keep learning every day" (Teacher 4, School A). Another teacher stated that "professional development is vital for teachers as theories and teaching methods change from time to time" (Teacher 2, School A). For these group of teachers, they believed CPD is a strategy which teachers use to develop and improve their teaching approaches in parallel with the needs of students and the direction of education in the country. Also, despite their common perceptions that CPD should be formal and structured, the responses from these teachers' also

indicated that they were aware that CPD could occur continuously and does not only take place sporadically or ad-hoc.

In summary, teachers in the focus group interviews perceived CPD as a form of professional learning conducted either by the Ministry or the school. Most teachers appeared to have been more involved in the more formal form of CPD as compared to informal forms because they considered formal CPD as structured and acknowledged by the Ministry. Secondly, CPD was understood to be a mechanism for improving skills and knowledge in order to teach effectively and to keep them motivated in performing their work. Thirdly, teachers regarded CPD as an ongoing exercise to be well-informed of new developments in education. Although less frequently voiced, a further perception attributed to CPD was that it was an essential part of their professional growth and professionalism. Nonetheless, it is notable that teachers' perception of CPD is coherent with the literature on teacher professional development that recognises the term CPD as having diverse forms and meanings (see Chapter 3, Section 3.3.1).

6.4.2 CPD opportunities

According to the data collected from the interviews, the teachers' responses indicated that there are many forms of CPD available in the system. The most frequently[6] mentioned CPD activities in the focus group interviews included; talks and seminars (15), workshops (11), conferences (7), study visits (5) and book review activity (4). Teachers justified that the form of CPD that they always participated in were the ones that were regulated by the school or the Ministry. For instance, as several teachers said:

[6] The occurrences of these words and relevant phrases were computed using the 'find' function in the MAXQDA software.

> In our school, the types of CPD depends on the content that the senior leaders want to deliver to teachers. Whenever the Ministry introduces a new curriculum, often CPD will be about that (Teacher 3, School A).

> We always receive an official letter from the Ministry requesting our participation in CPD. Usually, it is conducted for two to three days at a training centre or the DEO (Teacher 9, School C).

Only one focus group mentioned "collaborative" practice as an example of CPD activity. They highlighted that their school occasionally conducted classroom observations, but such activities were always perceived as a form of teacher evaluation rather than a means for teacher learning and collaboration. The teachers' further reported that the school leaders eventually decided to conduct CPD activities in the form of seminars and workshops which involved the entire staff of the school. One teacher mentioned that:

> Teachers always feel insecure and uncomfortable when someone else observes them teaching. We also don't have the time to do this kind of activity. Other than our conflicting schedules, the school usually refused to allow us to do it because this requires teachers to be covered or relieved from their classes in order to observe another. In the end, we just didn't do it anymore. (Teacher 9, School C).

In this instance, the school leaders might have assumed that it would be easier to conduct such CPD activities with all staff because it not only involved all teachers but at the same time, this approach allowed them to fulfil statutory requirements regarding education reform. However, what seems to be overlooked in this case by the leadership of the school is the need for the teachers' personalised development.

Furthermore, in two focus groups, the teachers mentioned that CPD opportunities depended on what the school's leadership considered as of greater significance towards the need of the school as compared to the needs of the teachers. One teacher expressed her

concern by saying that when she was invited by the DEO to represent her school in a conference to present her action research findings, the school refused to cover her travelling expenses, saying:

> The DEO already agreed to pay for the registration fee and accommodation. I wasn't asking for much, and I am doing it for the school. I was also asked to take *Cuti Rehat Khas* (CRK) (Teachers have seven-days special leave per year designated for emergencies) (Teacher 1, School A).

This view raised a question about what kind of CPD was deemed acceptable by the leadership of the said school and underscored the financial constraints existing in many schools. An alternate explanation may have also been; by allowing the teachers to be absent from school, this may create further issues. Therefore, in the view of the school's leadership, teachers should be in the classroom, teaching. Another teacher's experience, on the other hand, showed that the school leaders had always supported her participation in CPD. Further, she was able to engage in many CPD opportunities due to her duty as the 'data' teacher which was considered by the school leadership as a vital role as it was directly relevant to the entire school's development needs. However, her CPD is directed by the needs of the school rather than her personal and professional needs. Therefore, both these instances indicate that teachers may have limited opportunity to make decisions regarding their individual CPD needs.

In brief, the findings suggest that the prescriptive, deficit model of CPD often carried out in the form of seminars and workshops involving all school staff would not motivate, nor would it encourage teachers to be actively engaged with CPD. Instead, the opposite in this case; such activities have the potential to damage the teacher's ability to manage and plan their own professional growth and development. Rather, teachers will continue to be identified as 'technicians' and a 'compliant' workforce. Hence, it can be assumed that despite the availability of various CPD activities in the system, teachers are

restricted to school-based CPD prescribed by the school's leadership which are closely aligned to the broader agenda of reform. However, teachers spoke infrequently about collaborative CPD due to their strong views towards formal and structured professional development and the lack of support in collaborative form of CPD offered in their respective schools.

The next few sections provide insight into the teachers' first encounters and experiences with the policy and the reality of teacher CPD in Malaysia before and after the implementation of the PPPB policy.

6.5 Teachers' first encounter with the policy

The PPPB policy was officially launched towards the end of December 2014. It was during this time that the ministry officials at the central level including the policy authors went on nation-wide roadshows by presenting and briefing teachers and education communities about the existence and nature of the policy. The policy authors mentioned that teachers mainly received information regarding the policy through their school leaders. As mentioned by one of the policy authors:

> We began by informing school leaders about the policy using the cascade approach. The DEO gathered all principals in the district and then they are expected to disseminate the content of the policy to the teachers (Policy author C, 21/07/2016).

All the teachers in the three focus groups reported that they first encountered the policy when the school leaders gave a briefing about the policy during their staff meeting. In fact, the majority of them described the briefing as being communicated in a 'one-way' manner, and they were only given a simplified version or overview of the policy. The teachers described the handouts they received as merely containing basic information about the policy, such as the definition,

aim, rationale and the new expectations in their CPD engagement. An important comment made by one of the teachers:

> My principal didn't even ask what we think of the policy. He just explains the policy according to the copy of the slides he distributed (Teacher 11, School C).

In such a situation, assuming that the policy was firstly translated, interpreted and re-contextualised by the school leaders appropriately to suit the needs and context of the school, some pertinent information might have been lost during the process. This practice also implies that the values and beliefs of school leaders might have influenced their understanding of the policy which is imposed on teachers. Indirectly, this exercise appears to have turned teachers into passive recipients of policy. Notably, teachers' may have interpreted the policy differently from the school leaders' translation and interpretation of the intention of the policy. In relation to this assumption, the majority of teachers argued that they are neglected or not considered by policymakers or the school leaders whenever the Ministry decided to adopt a new innovation. Indeed, this notion indicates that it is the implementation process that is one-way, and top-down (because that is the structure and culture of the system). So, in effect, what is transmitted to the teachers is not the content of the policy but rather the process of implementing the policy. Further, some teachers in this study voiced their concerns that they would like to take part in the policymaking process, particularly regarding policies on CPD. The fact that their voices were not heard concerning their views towards the formulation or the implementation of the policy may have led to dissatisfaction, frustration and resistance amongst many of the teachers.

Nevertheless, despite the teachers' keen interest in the decision-making process, the data showed that most of the teachers did not access the policy which was available on the Ministry's website. The

teachers affirmed that they only referred to the handouts that had been distributed by the school leaders during the school briefings. In this respect, the teachers appeared not to display any firm commitment towards the implementation of the policy. The commitment that the policymakers expected to see from the teachers, however, was not evident in the findings. The policy authors noted that while the decision to make the policy accessible online was partially due to financial constraints, at the same time, it signified the level of trust awarded by the Ministry for teachers to read, interpret and implement the policy. Another way of viewing this situation, is that, given the manner the policy was implemented, and the positioning of teachers as passive recipients, eventually, they would resume to play this role, not being fully committed to accessing nor understanding the policy, even when the information was readily available.

6.5.1 CPD before and after the reform

When asked about their experiences before they were required to implement the PPPB policy, the teachers who had more than ten years of teaching experiences were able to offer some insights on how their engagement with CPD in the past differed from the existing CPD practice. Whereas, teachers with less teaching experience, seemed to relate their CPD involvement and experiences as not being any different from previous ones (i.e. before the reform was implemented). As noted earlier, this gap could be attributed to teachers' having been exposed to the latest information and a variety of CPD activities regarding professional development during their initial teacher education.

CPD before the reform

The more experienced teachers mentioned that the content of CPD in the past tended to focus on improving their pedagogical knowledge and skills, whereas, presently, CPD is concentrating on new

policies, curriculum and exam-oriented matter. Two teachers mentioned:

> In the past, we had workshops and discussions on pedagogies and presented to the whole group of teachers. Something like macro-teaching. Such activity gives you lots of ideas for approaches that we can use in our own classroom. Now, it is more about new policies and curriculum. Most of the time it's exam-based…more on techniques how to help students get better results in exams (Teacher 2, School A).

> All we are asked to learn now is new policies, new curriculum…what to do and what not to do. The administrative team usually decides what we will be doing during our LADAP [in-service training]. Most of the time it is nothing related to what we do in the classroom (Teacher 6, School B).

In the context of reform, CPD is expected to bring about changes and improvements. The issues that the teachers were raising appeared to be that CPD is designed in such a way that makes sense to policymakers (information about the policies) but not to classroom teachers' (what I can do in the classroom). Also, the former kind of CPD is gradually squeezing out formal workshops on the latter. Another teacher commented:

> CPD is often conducted on the current issues or topics, for example, 'Learning for the 21st-century'. After the school leaders attended briefings at the DEO, they will give talks or briefings to teachers at school to share the information. It is not on something that we are interested in. We attended because we have to (Teacher 4, School A).

Since CPD is a compulsory activity for all teachers and is synonym with the seven-days mandated CPD to which all civil servants must comply with, the CPD activities at the school level often involved all teachers in the school. Because of this, the content of CPD was perceived by

teachers to be of lesser significance as compared to their physical presence at the CPD venue.

In sharing their experiences of pre-reform CPD, most teachers mentioned that they frequently participated in formal courses regulated by the Ministry and were often called out of school to attend a two to three-day training course conducted somewhere else. They also noted that the Ministry fully-funded their participation and they remembered how much they enjoyed attending such courses. Interestingly, the teachers only seemed to remember this form of CPD even though there were other activities, for example, workshops and school-based CPD were available before the reform. Furthermore, their responses were confined to formal training, and most of the CPD before implementation of the PPPB policy was typically conducted in this form. A possible reason for this is the fact that CPD was planned and provided for them by the Ministry, suggesting the teachers' limited opportunity in managing their individual professional development needs.

Another significant difference between CPD both before and after the implementation of the reform initiative is the frequency in attending CPD courses as mentioned by several teachers.

> The last time I attended a course was five years ago (Teacher 5, School B).
>
> I used to get letters to attend courses every year, but not anymore (Teacher 2, School A).
>
> Now the Ministry only calls out one teacher from each school (Teacher 7, School B).

The teachers from the three focus groups perceived that any opportunities to participate in Ministry-led CPD became limited following the reform. However, such response is not surprising as apparently in the Blueprint that the Ministry planned to reduce the quantity of Ministry-led CPD programmes and encourage schools instead, to organise more school-based CPD from 2013 (Ministry of

Education, 2013). Perhaps, such perceptions could also be ascribed to the fact that other forms of CPD, were not accorded with sufficient weight or priority by the system.

CPD after the reform

Teachers from one focus group mentioned that they became aware of the existence of other forms of CPD other than the present forms conducted by the Ministry after their principal highlighted this fact during the PPPB policy briefing. It is interesting to observe in this case, that the teachers mentioned that all along they had been involved in the CPD activities listed in the policy (see Figure 5.2) although not as extensive as their participation in the formal forms of CPD. One of the reasons contributing to this circumstance according to the teachers is that CPD is always planned and organised by the school and they have no choice but to participate in the activity. One teacher noted by saying that:

> There was once when I couldn't attend training, the principal demanded me to come out with a show cause letter for my absence (Teacher 4, School A).

Even following the implementation of the policy, the teachers in all the focus groups agreed that they are still expected to be more engaged with formal, school-based CPD even though they are encouraged to be undertaking more informal, self-initiated professional development. Such orientation, according to the teachers, was not sufficiently recognised by the school leaders. In a way, such inclination reflects the top-down policy implementation mechanism that is still followed by the system, resulting in the teachers' views of CPD, continuing to be restricted towards the prescriptive forms of learning instead.

The teachers' responses to their CPD experiences when the PPPB policy was initially introduced were overwhelming. In fact, most

teachers responded negatively to the Ministry's suggestion for teachers to prepare a CPD portfolio to document their engagement with CPD. For the teachers, while this idea was only a suggestion, it was taken seriously. In many ways, it angered the teachers given the 'extra' work it required them to undertake in addition to their existing heavy workload. Some teachers used words like 'urged', 'pushed' and 'threatened' when commenting on the CPD portfolio. As a matter of fact, the teachers appeared to have perceived this suggestion as a form of a directive from the Ministry, thereby resulting in their indifferent attitudes towards the policy, and the new expectations of CPD. Almost all teachers in the focus groups stated that they were required to prepare a CPD portfolio containing information and evidence of their participation in CPD and submit it to their school leaders for inspection. Although the policy authors claimed that the CPD portfolio is not compulsory; it is also evidenced in the policy document that the Ministry clearly stated, "CPD portfolio (not compulsory)" (Ministry of Education, 2014: 39). In this instance, the school leaders appeared to have misunderstood the information. The teachers commented by saying:

> Our principal told us that we must buy the expensive CPD folder. It was RM25.00 each. Since everyone bought it, I also bought it. I thought it was compulsory (Teacher 10, School C).

> We were urged to submit the portfolio within certain dates. Imagine what we have to do to put in all evidence of our CPD participation urgently (Teacher 8, School B).

The teachers' responses further revealed that most of them considered the Ministry's 'suggestion' for teachers to engage more in individual and self-initiated CPD as an added burden to their present workload. Moreover, teachers seemed to view this notion as an 'obligation' or 'requirement' rather than as a 'suggestion'. However, it appears that when the policy was implemented under a top-down

hierarchical structure, guidelines or suggestions were typically interpreted instead, as requirements. Teachers in this study appeared to be extremely irritated by the fact that they now needed to plan and fund their own CPD. The comment below suggests this assumption:

> It is not easy to change the norm. We have been doing CPD that way for a very long time. The Ministry provided everything for us. We just have to attend their programmes. To start planning and doing CPD on my own initiative may be difficult. With the amount of work, I don't think I will be able to do it. I don't feel like doing it (Teacher 2, School A).

A likely explanation for such a reaction could be that teachers are still reliant on external regulation, in which in this case, they understood professional development as being the responsibility of the Ministry and as such, should be regulated and managed by the Ministry. This is because, during the pre-reform CPD, the Ministry paid for everything, including course fees, accommodation, food and transportation. All teachers needed to do was to engage with the CPD that was offered to them.

An implication that could be derived from the discussion above is that teachers' perception of CPD is limited to formal activities, organised by the Ministry and schools which has often been to fulfil national agendas. This is because teachers are so used to the centralised, top-down training mechanism operated by the system. Thus, when a change of practice is seen as a prerequisite, in this case, it appears to have resulted in strong resistance among the teachers towards the said policy. Notwithstanding, this theme regarding teachers' resistance will be further elaborated under the section related to the effects of policy implementation.

Overall, the comparative analysis of CPD before and after the implementation of the PPPB policy has shown a significant difference, particularly in the ways teachers' view their engagement with CPD and

the accountability they are required to justify as part of the changes to their professional learning. Although they were offered greater variety regarding CPD activities following the reform process, the teachers still seemed to have a preference over more formal, Ministry-led, in-service CPD. Later in this chapter, discussion on how teachers' involvement in the policy implementation process will be presented and how it affects the way in which they view their current engagement with CPD. Notably, this will shed further light and more detail on their claims as mentioned above.

6.5.2 Teachers' roles in implementing the policy

The top-down policy approach often presumes that policymakers could fully stipulate policy intentions, and implementers could achieve successful implementation through the establishment of appropriate instruments. As mentioned in Chapter 5, the policy authors assumed that if teachers were to follow the implementation 'manual' provided in the PPPB policy, the transformation of the way they engage with CPD would occur as intended (see Section 5.2.6). However, the responses from teachers in this study showed the contrary. Teachers asserted that they were generally aware of the demands of the Ministry to implement any policies that were made at the central level. As to how it has been with other policies before the PPPB, teachers in one focus group argued that the Ministry provided inadequate information concerning their respective roles as implementers of policies. Reiterating the fact that they were briefly informed about the content of the policy, they claimed that:

> There were no guidelines given on how we should do this. The Ministry always assume that we know everything (Teacher 2, School A).

> The Ministry thinks that if the policy is passed down to us that we will be able to implement it just like that…successfully (Teacher 3, School A).

> It is as if this is the only policy we need to focus on (Teacher 4, School A).

The responses received from these teachers again led to the assumption that perhaps this relates to the mode or method of disseminating policy. If school leaders facilitated a discussion around the policy and the manner in which the policy should be implemented in their schools would this lead to greater ownership? The comments above indicated that the teachers felt bewildered and confused about what they were expected to do. The claim that they received unclear procedures and justification of their roles as part of the implementation process may continue to be an obstacle as the implementation progresses. Put differently, teachers, as civil servants, having always been compliant to the Government's directives, were seen to be facing difficulties in making their own judgements regarding their respective roles as implementers of the PPPB policy. Also, the teachers may have known to some degree, that they must change the way they engaged with CPD, but they may not have possessed a thorough understanding of the lasting impact of the practice and how to apply the changes. Additionally, the role of school leaders in this case, also appears to be critical to the extent in which they communicate with teachers and the effort that they are willing to partake to ensure that the school environment is supportive towards the teachers' attempts to adjust to their practices as part of the policy implementation process (Wedell, 2009).

Therefore, based on the above discussion, it can be inferred that the mindset of the teachers is still confined within the belief that the Ministry is responsible in providing them with a detailed set of guidelines or manuals on how to implement policies. Further, they appeared to prefer instead, to be told what to do rather than make

their own judgement. Possibly, this strong sense of compliance towards bureaucratic directives was influenced by the fact that their profession is part of the civil service, requiring them to follow and abide by orders of the Government.

The next section further elaborates on the influences that affect the implementation of the policy.

6.6 Influences on the PPPB policy implementation

Due to the confusion regarding the CPD profile when the policy was initially launched, teachers in the three focus groups reacted negatively, resulting in the inhibiting issues to outweigh the facilitating influences affecting its implementation. These influences include the teachers' misunderstanding of the intention of the CPD reform agenda and the teachers' prejudices towards the feasibility and practicality of the policy.

6.6.1 Teachers' misunderstanding of the intention of CPD reform

The PPPB policy suggests that teachers should innovate their CPD engagement, moving away from Ministry-led CPD and instead, engage in self-regulated professional development. In the view of the policymakers, they saw this as a window of opportunity for teachers to begin taking control of their individual professional development needs, a sense of 'empowerment' which is rarely present in highly-centralised systems. As mentioned by one policy author:

> With this policy, teachers can decide when, how and why they want to engage with CPD. They are now awarded this privilege (Policy author E, 21/07/2016).

Unexpectedly, teachers observed this 'empowerment' as the Ministry's 'excuse' to shift or sway their responsibilities of providing CPD to schools and teachers. Interestingly, teachers in one of the focus groups

used terms such as "fork out my salary" and "forced to pay" to reject the notion of 'empowerment' emphasised through their self-initiated CPD engagement.

Moreover, some of the teachers believed that the so-called 'empowerment' granted by the Ministry through the PPPB policy was in fact, an additional accountability mechanism. In their view, the need for teachers to record and document their CPD participation online and in portfolios as well as having to possess certain attributes and skills according to their tenure level is the Ministry's way to maintain control at a centralised level. Further, the control of what CPD teachers do has shifted to towards intensifying the monitoring and requiring teachers to perform their compliance via using the portfolios as a form of control. It is basically a shift from one form of state bureaucracy to a form of results-based management which resembles changes to education governance observed in Anglophone Western countries during and from the 1990s (Dale and Robertson, 2002; Ball, 2003). A teacher expressed her frustration with the Ministry's decision to include individual CPD portfolios as part of the instruments to evaluate teachers' performance. She said:

> Teachers may come out with excellent documentation of their CPD participation but, that doesn't mean he or she has the best quality or ability to teach (Teacher 2, School A).

This quote inferred that teachers questioned the relevance and validity of such evaluation and monitoring of teacher performance. Also, it is stated in the Blueprint that teachers will be assessed using the 'Unified Instrument' (UI), a new tool to evaluate teachers' performance and the individual's profile on CPD engagement is one of the key documents considered in determining their career progression (Ministry of Education, 2013; 2014). However, without an established if not sound understanding of how this new evaluation tool and CPD are related to

their career progression, teachers might continue to be resistant towards the PPPB policy.

The interview data further implied that teachers were unable to comprehend the rationale behind the need to change their CPD engagement due to the lack of information regarding the direction of the CPD system. Some teachers were not able to foresee how CPD could benefit their career progression because this information was missing from the PPPB policy. One teacher commented by saying:

> The information is 'compartmentalised'. The PPPB was introduced first. Then, the UI (Unified Instrument). God knows what's next (Teacher 7, School B).

It was noted in Chapter 5 (see Section 5.2) that as a consequence of the urgent need to meet the target deadline for releasing the policy, several important pieces of information were omitted by the policymakers. The missing information includes; teachers' career pathways, the CPD points system and teacher performance mechanism which are crucial from the teachers' perspective. Moreover, this signals how teachers are evaluated and the consequences for their career and income other than providing teachers with direction regarding their professionalism.

6.6.2 Teachers' prejudices towards the feasibility and practicality of the policy

Most of the teachers in this study confirmed that their knowledge of the policy was drawn from the briefing delivered by the school leaders, but only a limited number of teachers took the initiative to download and read the entire content of the policy. However, as noted by this group of teachers, their effort was due to the controversy regarding the CPD portfolio, and hence, they felt it was necessary and more important, to read and understand the actual intention of the policy. As mentioned by several teachers:

> There were so many versions of how to go about preparing the portfolio. Some said it is compulsory and some mentioned it was optional. I just had to check it myself (Teacher 5, School B).

> I had the PPPB document since last year [2015], but I didn't even bother to really read it. But, when the issue on the portfolio went viral on Facebook, I ended up reading the whole document (Teacher 1, School A).

The perception that they did not need to engage directly with the policy relates to the earlier finding where teachers valued CPD if it was immediately relevant to classroom practice rather than CPD that was about policy (see Section 6.5.1). Also, they did not expect the policy to be immediately relevant to their everyday work, or, put differently, to help them carry out their job. Alternatively, this may have also been attributed to the various layers of administration responsible for filtering information to teachers and what did finally filter down to teachers, in this case, appeared to be quite limited. Also, this orientation might have been due to the outcome of the top-down, cascading method of policy dissemination where information tends to be diluted as it moves down to the bottom level of the policy chain. Further, it also appears that other methods to disseminate policies that could have worked better for teachers were neglected, for example placing a hard copy of the policy in staff rooms. Several teachers commented:

> At the end of the day, parents only want results. Parents do not care about our standards of teaching. The same goes for this policy (Teacher 9, School C).

> I think it is similar to what we are doing now. That's why I don't really bother looking into it. I have been teaching for a long time. I think it has always been the same thing, but it is being put under a different name or something. It doesn't interest me (Teacher 10, School C).

> This is just like before. We still need to follow what the Ministry wants us to do (Teacher 4, School A).

For other teachers, they appeared to be unconcerned regarding the policy. In fact, their views as mentioned above, implied that having been in the profession for many years, experienced teachers had undergone numerous educational reforms, requiring various policies to be implemented. However, many of the demands were ignored as they believed these were no different from their current teaching practice. Similarly, this position also indicates that teachers were complacent with performing their various routines or practices, given they assumed they knew what the Government was trying to impose upon them. Therefore, their understanding of the policy was influenced by their [teaching] priorities, or they simply might have viewed it in a similar vein to other policies that had been introduced, in which turned out to be less significant and later forgotten.

Other than the emotional resistance noted in the above paragraphs, the responses from the teachers in this study appeared to focus on the 'problems' created by the policy itself. The teachers' responses were more likely to focus on finding and highlighting the weaknesses or flaws of the reform and offering reasons in order to maintain the present situation. Comments by some teachers indicated this assumption:

> We don't receive sufficient support from the school to participate in CPD of our choice. How do you expect us to participate in self-initiated learning? (Teacher 7, School B).

> The Ministry's server is so slow, and it takes ages to fill in information online, and they expect me to do online learning? It's going to be wasting much of my time! (Teacher 10, School C).

> The Ministry keeps on asking for more and more documentation. This CPD portfolio adds to that (Teacher 4, School A).

Some teachers came out with justifications as to why they were not willing to make changes to their work and practice and provided 'excuses' which seem to be caused by the practicality of the policy with their daily realities. Notwithstanding, it might also have been caused by teacher unreadiness or unpreparedness to implement and adopt change or changes in their present practices. So, on most occasions, due to their resistance to change, teachers to a certain extent, disrupted the change process (Zimmerman, 2006).

Moreover, some of the teachers in the focus groups appeared to view CPD as a short-term activity focussing on the tangible results rather than learning. Their engagement with CPD was mainly driven by the requirement to fulfil the seven-days mandated CPD and a form of adherence to the school CPD culture. For these teachers, as long as they fulfilled this requirement, they were considered to have participated in CPD. In this respect, their CPD participation is measured by the number of days they attended CPD but not by the degree of learning they gained from the process. The teachers stated:

> Every year I make sure that I fulfil the seven days CPD requirement. Once I did that, I am done for the year (Teacher 9, School C).

> If you cannot make it to the CPD programme arranged by the school, you must do a book review activity as a replacement for your attendance (Teacher 4, School A).

Based on these comments, it could also be inferred that there appears to be little to no follow-up mechanism to see to what degree teachers learned from their professional development activities. Sadly, learning seems to be a 'one-off thing' for these teachers. Unless teachers realise that CPD actually means ongoing professional development and that

they need to be continually learning, such superficial CPD participation measurement will continue to restrict teacher professionalism within the controlled-compliant dimension. In this regard, the school leaders' role is crucial in changing the school's CPD culture.

In summary, how teachers view the relevance of the policy in their daily work influences their attitudes towards the intended purpose of the policy. Their understanding of the policy appeared to differ from those of the policy authors as a consequence of the accountability measure imposed by the Ministry through the need for teachers to prepare portfolios to verify their CPD participation. The ways in which information regarding the policy was disseminated also might have contributed to teachers' indifferent attitudes towards the implementation of the said policy. Other than that, incomplete information regarding the direction of their career and the relevance of CPD in this orientation have likewise led to teachers responding negatively towards the policy. Finally, insufficient monitoring and follow-up from the Ministry appeared to affect further the teachers' attempts in making changes to their professional development regulatory requirement and engagement. Hence, necessary intervention regarding assisting teachers in making sense of the intentions of CPD reform may contribute to better reception of the policy.

6.7 CPD through the lens of three teachers

This section discusses the relationship between professionalism, stage of career and response to PPPB policy of three individual teachers through the recount of their CPD experiences.

6.7.1 Pen portraits: Siti, Suri and Rina

As a means to fully utilise the data from the interview, it is important to understand the background and context of each individual teacher initially. This section begins with a brief overview of the three

teachers as well as an account of their background and experience. These pen portraits were scripted based on the information provided by the teachers during the individual interview sessions, capturing the nearest impression and view of each teacher and conceded the data to be construed in relation to their particular contexts. The teachers approved and verified the pen portraits as a true reflection of their background, experiences and context. Their names, however, are pseudonyms to preserve their anonymity.

Siti

Siti is 40 years of age, married, with three young children. She has been a teacher for 16 years and the school in which she was teaching, was her third school and she taught the English Language. The school was a large secondary school located in the suburbs consisting of almost 2,700 multi-racial students. Aside from the 20 periods (one period is equal to 40 minutes) of teaching per week, she held several important positions at her school. She was the head of the language assessment panel in her school, the secretary of the co-curriculum department and was a member of several other school committees. Between the job of being a full-time teacher, wife and mother, she mentioned that she was hardly able to find enough time to relax and spend time with her family.

In the interview sessions, Siti looked positive and was prepared to share her story. Due to her enthusiasm and openness, some of the issues identified during her interviews were elaborated further in this dissertation. In her opinion, professional development is part of teaching, and it is all about being a professional:

> I know it [CPD] is something to do with our professionalism. It is something that you do which is in line with your professionalism…the development you must go through during that period. CPD is related to the improvement of knowledge and recognises teachers as professionals (Siti, 27/07/2016).

Throughout her career, Siti has participated in various CPD activities, and her recent favourite activity was attending education conferences. This enthusiasm was driven by the motivation to share the findings of her action research with the broader education community. She believed that teachers should make an effort to carry out small-scale research in their own classroom to identify issues that may restrict students' learning because much could be learned from the findings.

Siti has a strong view of CPD and a clear understanding of her responsibility to continuously be engaging with CPD, indicating her own identity as a teacher:

> According to the Blueprint, we need to move towards those kind of activities [professional inquiry]. It's up to us as teachers to help the students because we are the ones teaching them (Siti, 27/07/2016).

From her comment above, (she interchangeably referenced the Blueprint and the PPPB policy) and appeared to have recognised and supported the direction of the new CPD system. She also implied that not all teachers have the willingness to improve their teaching or change the way they engage with CPD, indicating them as being less professional and did not identify with them. The following citation evidently suggests that from her perspective, some of her colleagues are lacking a similar degree of understanding:

> I shared what I did with my colleagues, but some of them may not like it because it is a new approach…they don't like it when your teaching is not the typical 'chalk and talk' method. They said it is time-consuming, involves lots of preparation. So, when I shared what I've learned, they acknowledged the benefit of the approach, but they never use it in their classroom (Siti, 27/07/2016).

Siti seemed to identify herself as being in some ways more professional for going that extra mile to help the students as compared to her other colleagues. To her, teaching is a profession that requires individuals to

put the students as the priority first, thereby reflecting quality and professionalism towards their work. Siti's strong views regarding teachers' professional role and identity were dominantly featured throughout her interviews.

Suri

With 28 years of teaching experience, Suri was the most experienced teacher in this study. Altogether, she has taught in five different secondary schools. Suri used to hold the position as the Head of the English Language panel at her present school for six years. At the time of the interview, the school had placed her in charge of the school library. In addition to her present post, she taught the English Language to Form 3 (15-year-old) and 5 (17-year-old) students. Her present school is located in an upscale, suburban town and consisted of no more than 2,000 multi-ethnic students.

Throughout the interview, Suri's accounts appeared to be carefully considered, and she was very much concerned with how her views would be presented in the study. However, having been reassured of her confidentiality and anonymity, Suri became more relaxed, and she expressed some compelling opinions concerning CPD engagement and professionalism. The interview began with her sharing stories about how she started her career. She was enrolled at one of the initial teacher education institutions under the Ministry when she was 18 years old and began teaching at the age of 24. She frequently said that teaching nowadays is so different from how it was 20 years ago. The following quote provided an insight into Suri's view of the changing work of teachers:

> I still remember that I used to look forward to coming to school…to teach, but not anymore. The amount of clerical work has not only doubled…I think it has increased tremendously. With all the online data that teachers need to key in, the various demands from the DEO and now the pressure to do our own CPD. Our CPD in the past was

> much better. The Ministry did everything for us. Now to have LADAP [INSET] we have to pay for it. We also need to provide proof for our participation (Suri, 25/7/2016).

Suri appeared to be very frustrated with the present status of the teaching profession. She felt that previously teaching had been rewarding for her as she was able to spend more time teaching and preparing lessons. Though Suri found teaching challenging, and at times could be mentally and emotionally tiring, her passion kept her going. Her commitment towards helping students to be successful, reflected her vocation for teaching and the way she recognised herself as a teacher, provided an understanding of her sense of professionalism.

Nevertheless, Suri mentioned that being a senior teacher and having been in the service for a long time has led towards her low motivation to partake in professional development activities as well as teaching. She attributed her lack of motivation not only because of her age but also due to the lack of support. Her remarks demonstrated how she felt:

> How can we become professional when we are not treated professionally? I think our job is to teach and upgrade students' level; then we can be professionals. We are not given the 'space' to become professionals, and we now have to be accountable for what we do. I feel downgraded. Also, there are so many issues in the news condemning teachers (Suri, 25/7/2016).

The 'space' that she mentions above is an indication of 'trust' that Suri was questioning. She strongly felt that the Ministry's constant demands on teachers to raise education quality by necessitating them to engage with CPD continuously, while, simultaneously imposing performativity and accountability mechanism in their work, was frustrating. The perceived lack of trust from the Ministry and judgements of the public appeared to have impacted Suri's perceptions and identity as a teacher

at the time of interviewing. As such, it also influenced most of the responses regarding her engagement with CPD after the implementation of the PPPB policy.

Rina

Rina is the youngest out of the three focus teachers chosen for this study. She is married and has a daughter who attended primary school. Rina has a degree in education specialising in Physics, but during the interview, Rina mentioned that she taught Bahasa Malaysia and Mathematics because there was already a sufficient number of Physics teachers at her school. Other than her teaching responsibilities, she had been responsible for the school data management. The school where she was teaching is a large secondary school, located in the suburbs and consisted of more than 2,600 students of various ethnicity. Rina had five years of teaching experience. Perhaps, having the least experience among the three focus teachers and being young, she seemed motivated and keen when answering the interview questions. She also remained positive throughout the interview. Nevertheless, at times, I felt that her views were articulated into something that I would have wanted to hear.

Rina claimed that her responsibility as the 'data teacher' at the present school had affected her intense motivation to engage with CPD. She took up the position due to her keen interest in data management. She stated:

> I don't mind attending CPD as long as it benefits me. But, I very much prefer engaging with CPD related to data management. In fact, I'm willing to pay for it (Rina, 02/08/2016).

Rina reported that other than her own willingness to engage with CPD, the school leaders also played a major role in her frequent participation in CPD. The kind of support she received included the permission to

attend CPD during school contact hours and a reduction in teaching hours so that she could focus on her duty as a data teacher. She also noted that this position also requires her to attend quite a number of formal, Ministry-led CPD in the form of seminars and workshops, requiring her to be away from school for many days. Despite this requirement, Rina views CPD and her professionalism positively.

> The CPD courses I attended made me feel like a professional. I get to interact and share my expertise. At the same time, I learn new knowledge. I also feel valued and appreciated (Rina, 02/08/2016).

The quote above provided an insight into the way Rina identified herself as a teacher. Rather than focusing on her pedagogical practice, the CPD she preferred to engage with was more relevant to her responsibility as a data teacher. In fact, she seemed to have enjoyed this role more than teaching, indicating that she has a clear direction of her professionalism and professional role. The next section focuses on the themes that emerged during the individual interviews.

6.8 Emergent issues

The individual interviews provided profound insights into the teachers' engagement with CPD and their perceptions towards professionalism although not clearly identified at the beginning, they were apparent from all three interviews. The three emergent issues that arose across the three individual interviews include their perceptions of teacher professionalism, the relationship between CPD and the stage of career and their responses to the PPPB policy. These themes seem to have emerged through their comments regarding teaching as a profession and the raising standards agenda promoted by the current nation-wide reform initiative such as the new performance management system. The different stages of their career, however, appears to have no apparent influence in the selection of, an

opportunity to engage with CPD. Whereas, in relation to the teachers' responses to the PPPB policy, they seemed to have spoken in great lengths on the barriers that hindered teachers from engaging with alternative ways and methods of undertaking CPD. The findings from the interview data were discussed, and the insights were based on detailed analysis and interpretation of the teachers' comments and responses. Evidence to support their claims is presented through quotations from the teachers themselves.

6.8.1 Teachers' perceptions of professionalism

In this section, teacher professionalism denotes the teachers' understandings of the meaning of profession (Webb et al., 2004). Siti, Suri and Rina were asked to share their opinions on professionalism particularly regarding their perceptions and concerns towards the conditions that determine teacher professionalism.

Teaching as a profession

The three teachers claimed that teaching is a profession and they became teachers by choice. Furthermore, their decision to become teachers was influenced by the results of the national examinations, the stability of the teaching profession and guaranteed job placement. To become a teacher in Malaysian public schools, candidates for the Bachelor of Education programme or *Program Ijazah Sarjana Muda Pendidikan* (PISMP) are required to have three distinctions and three credits in the Malaysia Certificate of Education as well as passing compulsory tests and interviews set by the Ministry (Ministry of Education, 2013). Teachers who were sponsored by the Ministry and graduated from the ITE or local universities are usually offered a job in public schools (see Chapter 2, Section 2.5). Hence, being a part of the public service, they considered teaching as a secure job.

Other than the abovementioned reasons, Suri said that her ambition to become a teacher was initially influenced by her altruistic

interest to make a difference in the lives of as many students as she could.

> Seeing students pass their exams and get a job is what makes me want to become a teacher in the first place (Suri, 25/7/2016).

However, Suri's perception of teaching practice shifted over time due to the nature and frequency of reforms and work intensification which she believed reduced her time and quality in preparing for classroom teaching. Similarly, the constant changes and reforms also made Siti feel demoralised. In her view, teachers had frequently been requested to adapt to educational changes; be it the revision in curriculum or introduction of a new education agenda. She was frustrated with how these changes and reforms had been poorly implemented resulting in the continual disruption of teachers' work. She said:

> The Ministry is always introducing new things. We are the ones who must deal with the change. For example, when PPSMI (Teaching and Learning of Science and Mathematics in English) was introduced, I had to change the way I teach, attended so many courses on it, yet, it was abolished after a few years of implementation. Then, I went back to how I have been teaching before PPSMI. Why can't they (the Ministry) trust us to do our job? (Siti, 20/7/2016)

This particular question: "Why can't they trust us to do our job?" indicates that she felt that those in power and with authority did not care about what teachers went through during reforms and assumed that they could simply change or switch their teaching habits and practices to match the prescribed policies. The teachers' inability to avoid or reject imposed changes which conflict with their beliefs resulted in them feeling the "inescapable certainty of despair" (Hargreaves, 1998: 327).

Rina, in contrast, noted that her concern with the profession was related to her sense of professionalism which she gained through her individual effort and collaboration with her colleagues. Despite not teaching the subject of her specialisation, she took the initiative to equip herself with appropriate skills and knowledge because she was more concerned with her capability to enhance students' learning and her satisfaction in work emerged from the improvement in students' learning. From her perspective, Rina regarded CPD as a means for her to aspire to do the best in her work and to be a better teacher. She also stressed that doing CPD was not simply about being urged or forced to learn how to do something, but instead, it is about how teachers reflect on the knowledge or skills gained for further self-development. Also, Rina perceived CPD as part of being a professional and as an opportunity for her to network and collaborate with other teachers, along with the chance to expand her personal and professional knowledge and skills. She appeared to see professionalism as being related to occupational value (see Chapter 3, Section 3.3.2).

The raising standards agenda

The present education reform has continuously highlighted the role of teachers in improving the quality of education in the country which has resulted in the public placing higher expectations on them. Siti and Suri highlighted that the pressure imposed on schools to perform well and achieve certain performance targets set by the SEO and DEO had affected their professionalism. For example, due to the Ministry's expectation to improve the standard of English Language in Malaysian schools, English Language teachers were required continuously to attend CPD and sit for language proficiency tests. Such demands led to Siti and Suri believing that their skills and qualifications were being questioned. As a result, they felt de-professionalised. Siti's comment is illustrative of this criticism:

> We [English Language teachers] have sat for the APTIS test. Not long after that, we were required to sit for a test designed by Cambridge University. Recently, we have to attend courses on CEFR. It's never-ending for us. It's as if we are not qualified to teach English." (Siti, 19/07/2016).

Rina, who taught *Bahasa Malaysia* (the national language), however, did not mention about such pressures in her work. The reason for the difference in the demands for English Language and Bahasa Malaysia teachers might be attributed to the value, and functional role of the English Language used more readily for international communication, signifying its increasing importance in the education system.

Moreover, as part of the raising standards agenda, the teachers viewed the teaching profession as being subjected to the new performance management system. In relation to assuring high-standards of education and high-quality teachers, the present reform introduced the UI, a new performance evaluation tool[7] designed specifically to evaluate teachers (see Section 6.6.1). As mentioned earlier, one of the elements of the new performance management system is that teachers are encouraged (but teachers believed they are required) to prepare a CPD portfolio as evidence of their professional learning. This so-called 'requirement' not only contributed to the intensification of their heavy workloads but also made the teaching profession to be more competitive and more accountable. Suri's response is indicative of this claim:

> Many teachers in my school tend to be putting a lot of effort into preparing the portfolios that some of them neglected their core responsibility, which is teaching. They care more about the documentation than their abilities in teaching students." (Suri, 20/07/2016).

[7] Before the release of the Blueprint, all civil servants including teachers were evaluated using a standardised instrument regardless of their profession.

Although it is noted in the PPPB policy that teachers are encouraged to engage more with self-initiated CPD, they are still required by the Ministry to show evidence of their engagement in CPD activities. The issue of 'trust' which frequently surfaced in the individual and focus group interview data signifies the contradiction between the notion of teacher empowerment and control towards the teaching workforce. Thus, it was not surprising to see teachers feeling frustrated with the direction of the policy and the way the Government is shaping their professionalism.

6.8.2 CPD opportunities and its relationship with teachers' career

In an earlier section of this study, it was mentioned that other than formal, Ministry-led or school-based CPD, there were other forms of CPD available for teachers both before and after the introduction of the PPPB policy (see Section 6.5.1). However, the only form of CPD which the two individual teachers spoke about positively and in some detail were the study visits. Both Suri and Rina were observed happily speaking about the places they visited together with their colleagues as part of their engagement with CPD. As they described:

> We went on benchmarking visits quite a number of times. We've been to Cambodia, Vietnam and China. The teachers paid for the trips. During the trips, you will be reflecting on what you learnt every day (Rina, 02/08/2016).

> There's always something that we can learn when we visit other schools especially the ones abroad. Being away from the school itself is something that we look forward to." (Suri, 20/07/2016).

The above quotes suggested that these teachers considered CPD engagement outside the school premises as a rewarding activity and permitting them more time to think about their learning. The teachers

also mentioned that they were not only able to witness and benchmark best practices, but they could relate to similar issues that they had encountered at school and view them in different contexts.

CPD opportunities available at Siti's school were mainly in the form of seminars and workshops which were held at the school venue. Siti explicitly gave an example of this notion:

> Normally, in this school, when CPD is conducted at the school compound, teachers don't mind attending because they know it's compulsory. But when the administrative team suggested CPD to be done outside of the school, there were rejections from many teachers. We need to think about our family because it will be time-consuming to travel. Some said, they are too old for team building and so on. So far, I have been here six years; we only did our CPD elsewhere only once. The CPD we did was mostly seminars and workshops (Siti, 18/07/2016).

Siti remarked that this whole-school approach to CPD did not address or consider the needs, experiences or values of the individual teachers. The prescriptive model of CPD being offered to teachers in her school was perceived to be more attributed to the demands of the nation-wide reform initiative and the need to improve education quality. In her opinion, the school leaders might have assumed that with such demands, teachers need to be provided with information regarding the said reforms and the best possible and feasible ways to improve school performance. Consequently, according to Siti, decisions were always made by school leaders who inevitably prohibited teachers from identifying their own CPD needs.

Nevertheless, since the teaching workforce consists mainly of women, (as it is in the case of this study, as all participants are women), it is anticipated that they have to consider their roles as both a wife and mother when identifying CPD that would suit their circumstances. Perhaps, although they might have wished to participate in other forms of CPD, their situation might not be in their

favour, thus restricting their desire to pursue professional development or opportunities for career progression. Siti further argued that teachers should be considered and respected as individuals with various values, beliefs, experiences and professional development needs. She highlighted:

> It is as if we share the same view, values and needs. Teachers should be provided with the opportunity to make their own judgement on the kind of CPD they need and value. We should be autonomous and active participants of the CPD system, not simply as compliant civil servants (Siti, 25/07/2016).

Siti's comment suggested that if teachers continued doing CPD as it current stood, they are more likely to engage with the choice of CPD deemed fit by the school leadership and continue to be dependent upon external regulatory requirements.

In addition, across the three individual interviews, there was no strong evidence to suggest that teachers have engaged with CPD that is parallel with the stage of their career as aspired in the PPPB policy. As noted in Chapter 5 (see Section 5.2.5), based on the PPPB model of CPD, teachers are expected to partake in CPD that is suitable for their respective roles and responsibilities. Siti and Suri only mentioned that they participated in activities related to the subject they were teaching, while Rina spoke about CPD related to her responsibility as a data teacher. Rina, however, also stated that the only CPD that she thought was relevant to her career stage was the induction course which she had engaged with when she first started teaching.

> I remember that as a new teacher, I was involved with the induction programme for a year and was mentored by a senior teacher. I had to prepare reports and submit them to the Ministry as part of the requirement for job confirmation (Rina, 02/08/2016).

A likely reason for the limited number of comments on this particular issue is that the list of CPD courses or programmes suitable for the teachers' career stage was not readily available in the system. Further, it was apparent during the individual interviews that teachers seemed confused about what is expected of them. Without any guidelines on the kind of CPD that is suitable in line with their experience and career stage, teachers mentioned that they found it difficult to plan their own CPD effectively.

> I am not sure what CPD is suitable for my grade level. Where can I refer to this information? All I know is the 8-8-6-4 time-based[8] career path (Siti, 19/07/2016).

Unless a guideline or catalogue of CPD activities matching their career stage is made available and is accessible to teachers, they will continue to struggle with the direction of their professionalism. To a certain extent, teachers may become demotivated in pursuing professional development and tend to merely wait for the designated promotion. Thus, the three teachers rarely mentioned the CPD relevant to their career stage due to the unavailability of information regarding CPD programmes that the teachers could partake in line with their career pathway which left the teachers feeling confused with the direction of their own professionalism. The individual interview data also implies that teachers are more likely to make do with whatever CPD opportunities are presented and available to them and are less likely to expend effort to search for or engage with CPD that complements their grade level and experience.

[8] Teachers' normal career path under time-based pathway: Grade DG41 (8 years), DG44 (8 years), DG48 (6 years) and DG52 (3 years).

6.8.3 Teachers' responses to the PPPB policy

This section discusses the difficulties that the individual teachers face in their CPD engagement and the influences affecting their choice of CPD as part of their experience in implementing the PPPB policy. The challenges that were highlighted continuously by Siti, Suri and Rina throughout their interviews included the lack of release time to attend CPD, heavy workload, limited school support and insufficient CPD funding.

Lack of release time for CPD

All the three teachers cited the lack of release time for personalised CPD as one of the deciding factors for pursuing it.

> I don't have enough time to think about CPD (Siti, 19/07/2016).

> There's so much to do at school, and I don't have the time (Suri, 20/07/2016).

> Sometimes, I find it difficult to find time to do anything else (Rina, 02/08/2016).

Ministry-led CPD is usually conducted during the weekdays, while compulsory school-based CPD often occurs after school contact hours or on Saturdays. If teachers were to pursue external or personalised CPD, they needed to juggle these times with their existing work and family commitments. The unavailability of a specific time for individualised CPD seemed to have added to the teachers' lack of motivation to plan their own CPD and in turn hindered their participation in self-initiated CPD as highlighted in the PPPB policy.

Additionally, this condition also affects negatively on how these teachers view the status and importance of other forms of CPD. The prolonged exposure to the prescribed and deficit model of CPD led to teachers believing that self-initiated CPD must only be formal and

structured, thereby resulting in the teachers' inability to view other informal CPD activities, such as; learning communities, peer learning and professional inquiry as other forms of professional development which they could engage in school contact hours. This belief also detached self-directed learning and informal CPD as a component of CPD. For these teachers, if it is not allocated in a scheduled timetable, the activity does not count as CPD. Rina clearly expresses this view:

> There are some teachers who do not know what activity is counted as CPD. All they know is CPD is the seven days CPD that we must engage with annually. Other than the ones listed on our school calendar…the informal activity like discussions during panel meetings is not considered as CPD (Rina, 26/07/2016).

This view indicated the need to change teachers' mindset, but appropriate supports must be offered to them so that they can see the value of other forms of professional growth and hopefully motivate them to engage more in self-initiated CPD, in coherence with the goals of the PPPB policy.

Heavy workload

Both time factors and heavy workloads are apparently related to one another in influencing teachers' engagement with CPD. Due to their heavy workload, Siti and Suri felt that it was difficult for them to find time to join CPD activities.

> Doing CPD itself is a burden for me especially when it is held on Saturdays. Why should I even plan it? (Suri, 21/07/2016).
>
> At times, with the amount of work, I don't think I will be able to do it. I don't feel like doing it (Siti, 18/07/2016)

Additionally, with the shortage of time, the teachers felt that they could not engage with CPD activities especially when they were already

overloaded with clerical work and reform-related duties. Unsurprisingly, as a result, the teachers appeared to avoid planning their own CPD. Another likely explanation for this is that the heavy workload seemed to demotivate them from even thinking or considering about their professional growth. Notably, these teachers taught on average 20 to 25 hours per week and coupled with additional administrative work, their motivation to participate in CPD is seen at best, half-hearted. This related barrier was also apparent in the focus group interview data resulting in teachers feeling irritated with the accountability demands placed by the PPPB policy onto teachers (see Section 6.5.1).

Limited school support

The three teachers felt extremely demotivated because their schools' did not offer support when they wished to undertake self-initiated CPD. This is shown in Siti's response:

> If the CPD I like is organised during school hours and I have to pay for it, the school usually does not want to be responsible for it. They told me to attend CPD during the weekends or after school. That is just unfair. I want to do something to improve my knowledge and skills as a teacher, but the school doesn't really help you out with this (Siti, 19/07/2018).

Nevertheless, this quote indicates that any individualised CPD occurring during school contact hours must be approved by the school administration. Siti appeared to be frustrated with such decision resulting in the resistance of teachers not only towards the changing view of CPD but also towards implementing the PPPB policy. In response to this issue, Rina suggested that the school should support teachers by making arrangements and adjusting their teaching schedules so that they can engage with CPD or allow replacement teachers to cover their lessons. Nonetheless, to make this work, the

understanding of school leaders' and flexibility is seen as of utmost significance.

Insufficient CPD funding

In the opinion of the three teachers', the Ministry's ambition to reduce the number of Ministry-led CPD and increase school-based CPD outlined in the PPPB policy signified that there was a reduction in funding for teacher professional development. The responsibility to regulate and fund CPD activities now rely on the creativity of the school and the teachers. The Ministry claimed that this practice allows schools and teachers to exercise greater autonomy, as a form of empowerment for them to employ their own professional judgement. One of the policy authors stated:

> When the policy was developed, we had in mind that it is now time…. teachers will gain more autonomy not only in the choice of CPD activities but also the freedom to personalise their professional development (Policy author E, 21/07/2016).

The teachers, however, understood the intention of giving them the ownership of their professional development as a way for the Ministry to:

> illuminate the shrinking public-sector finances and shift the responsibility to teachers and schools (Suri, 20/07/2016).

These conflicting views, therefore, suggest that teachers' perceptions towards the changing CPD practice, differ from the intent in which is stipulated in the PPPB policy. However, in this vein, it is unreasonable to blame teachers for not wanting to engage more in CPD, particularly self-regulating CPD because some CPD activities are quite costly. For the three teachers, CPD funding seems to be a key contributory factor

for them to engage or discard the need to change the way they participate and view CPD.

6.9 Conclusion

The key feature to emerge from both the focus groups and individual interviews was that the implementation of the PPPB policy at the school level is viewed as being quite separate from the policy formulation process. The teachers seemed to comprehend that their role as part of the reform agenda was to implement the policy according to the directives from the Ministry. The Ministry, in contrast, was more likely to simply leave the decision on the ways the policy is implemented to the schools and teachers, resulting in misinterpretations of the intended outcomes of the policy. Notably, this was observed to have a strong undesirable bearing on the ways CPD is facilitated at schools since there was little to no follow-up measures taken on the implementation by the Ministry. Furthermore, school leaders appeared to have the tendency to 'inform' teachers regarding the content of the policy according to their understanding and interpretation instead of discussing it with the teachers on how a national change could be adjusted to 'match' the reality of their school. The anxieties over meeting the demands of the Ministry to make sure that all teachers are informed of the existence of the policy prevented many teachers from accurately realising the intended change required of them. As a consequence, professional development continues to be allied to the deficit model of CPD and therefore is not tailored to their experience or needs, signifying teachers' professionalism to remain as passive recipients of the said policy.

Also, it appeared from both interview findings that teachers have greater preference over formal CPD as compared to informal professional development. This is because formal CPD offers teachers structured content, and the Ministry usually funds it whereas informal CPD requires teachers to plan and organise their own CPD

engagement. The teachers' negative responses towards the implementation of the policy far outweighed the positive potential of the PPPB policy. Many of their reactions implied their resistance towards making changes to their existing practice. While, amongst others, most of the teachers argued that the policy did not consider the realities of their work, implying the limited voice given to them in the policymaking process.

In summary, the issues related to the emergent themes were as follows:

- There appears to be evidence of the divergence in both policy and practice. The way the policymakers formulated the policy was misunderstood and interpreted differently by teachers. The policy was aimed at changing teachers' mindsets and attitudes towards the way they engage with CPD, but teachers viewed this as a means for the Ministry to control the manner in which they work. Additionally, this circumstance may also be attributed to the problems related to policy implementation.

- The ways how CPD models are employed in an education system noticeably affect teachers' professionalism. Although the PPPB policy's main goal is to transform the ways teachers engage with CPD, the various forms of CPD that teachers subscribe to is still dominant towards the prescribed and deficit model of CPD.

- Schools seem to be lacking in a professional learning culture. Much of the teachers' responses indicate that they engage with CPD out of obligation rather than their own

willingness to learn, suggesting how they identify themselves as teachers.

In the following chapter, these arguments are deliberated in order to address the research aims and the reviewed literature. The discussion interprets the findings in Chapters 5 and 6 to make a theoretical contribution to knowledge, drawing out recommendations and conclusions.

Chapter 7
Repositioning Models of Teacher Professionalism and Change

7.1 Introduction

The Ministry's aspiration for a transformation in CPD practice seems to be inconsistent with the overall structure and management of the education system which is top-down and linear. This chapter focuses on the discussion regarding the relationships between policy intentions and the actual process of implementation in light of the theoretical framing. The study has attempted to situate the PPPB model of CPD within the global context of teacher professionalism which includes an exploration of the impact of CPD on teachers' practices and difficulties in their engagement with professional development opportunities that supports the Government's reform agenda. The research findings in Chapters 5 and 6 highlight the changing expectations placed on teachers and their engagement in CPD in the context of reform as a consequence of recent educational changes. These experiences, along with the pressure to perform, have shaped their attitudes toward education and their professional roles. The analysis on the aspect of learning foregrounding the PPPB policy has allowed the evaluation of teachers' existing CPD practice, issues and the broader policies related to these experiences (Kennedy, 2014). The chapter analyses closely the underpinning perspectives on professionalism that shapes the formulation of policies related to teacher CPD.

This chapter is organised into three sections. The first section discusses the divergence between policy and practice. The second section is related to the ways CPD models are deployed in an education system that influence teachers' professionalism, while the final section presents an alternative model that complements the existing model of CPD. As noted throughout the thesis, policymaking is not a straightforward process. Assuming that a policy is well-designed, the

involvement of various stakeholders usually leads to the diverse interpretation and translation of the same policy. The existence of other variables such as teachers' working contexts and the dissemination methods used in the implementation process are also possible reasons influencing the outcomes of policy, indicating the need to look closely at the entire CPD system. This is because the forms of CPD teachers engage with tend to influence their professionalism. A consideration of CPD models is, therefore, crucial, in understanding the unevenness of change in professionalism and its relationship to CPD in a context of systemic reform.

7.2 Divergence between Policy Intention and Translation

The implementation of educational policy needs to be well planned and carried out carefully to produce positive results. Honig (2006: 3) argues that the results and success of educational policy implementation are contingent on:

> …the interactions between policies, people, and places—the demands specific policies place on implementers; the participants in implementation and their starting beliefs, knowledge, and other orientations toward policy demands; and the places or contexts that help shape what people can and will do.

This means that studies on educational policy implementation such as this research should not simply be focusing on what is implementable, but rather, the aim should be to show the interaction and relationships between policies, people and places as a means to justify implementation outcomes. In this way, detailed information about the conditions under which certain interventions work may provide insights to local decision-makers and implementers to understand and explain implementation results in their workplaces and communities and devise strategies to overcome the drawbacks or flaws.

This study found that in the implementation of the PPPB policy, the aspiration of the CPD system and teachers' perceptions of CPD itself, to a certain extent, was inconsistent. This is mainly due to policy-related factors (Little, 1993; Fraser et al., 2007). Furthermore, it was observed that ambiguity of the CPD system, the teachers' silent voices in decision-making, the tension between institutional and teachers' needs, and underestimation of teachers' contextual realities are the possible factors that appear to have caused divergence between policy intention and translation.

7.2.1 Ambiguity of the CPD system

Fullan (2007) regards clarity as an important characteristic of reform and that diffuse goals and unspecified means of implementation concerning educational change often results in constant problems. He argues that "teachers and others find that the change is simply not very clear as to what it means in practice" (Fullan, 2007: 89). The vagueness of policies and unclear implementation procedures may become an obstacle as implementation progresses. Teachers may seem to know what they need to do with CPD, but they may not realise the impact of the practice in the long-run. So, limited or lack of understanding of the innovation may also lead to false clarity (Fullan, 2007), which may result in confusion, misunderstanding and sometimes dissatisfaction.

In the context of the study, there were many apparent instances of this ambiguity. Firstly, teachers receive information regarding the policy only through short briefings during staff meetings and were given handouts containing simplified information on the policy provided by the school leaders who initially received the input through a cascade approach. It is widely known that dissemination of information using the cascade model distorts the messages because they are passed down through several layers of authorities (Suzuki, 2008; Hayes, 2014). Not only may information be diluted due to miscommunication,

but it also creates diversity in interpretations of the original messages (Hayes, 2000; Dichaba and Mokhele, 2012). Also, limited opportunity for teachers in translating and interpreting policy results in the lack of common understanding of CPD being a component of the system-wide reform (Clement, 2014).

Secondly, Fullan (2007) claims that it is not possible for change to occur if the people involved in managing and regulating the many facets and procedures of reform do not have a shared understanding of its intended purpose. Accordingly, this study found that the meaning of 'quality' aimed to be achieved by the system-wide reform is not clearly articulated within the aims of the CPD system. For instance, 'quality' is illustrated as the "quality of a high international standard" in which "all students will have the opportunity to attain an excellent education that is uniquely Malaysian and comparable to high-performing education systems" (Ministry of Education, 2013: E-9). In simpler terms, 'quality' is equated with Malaysia being in the top third countries in student international tests such as PISA and TIMSS in 15 years. It is also frequently mentioned in the Blueprint and the PPPB policy that "improving the quality of teachers starts with a clear articulation of what excellence in the teaching profession looks like" (Ministry of Education, 2013: 5-10). Ironically, there is no exact definition or explanation of how this supposed 'excellence' in the teaching profession should resemble, as the concern seems to rely simply on student outcomes. If the quality of teachers in the high-performing countries is the benchmark, teachers should have been supplied with a clear explanation of how this 'quality' looks at the school level and how it could be attained through appropriate, local CPD interventions. Providing teachers with a long list of CPD activities without showing them how these activities contribute to the intended quality will not guarantee a change in teachers' practice. Based on their analysis of five cases of performance-based large-scale reforms, Leithwood et al. (2002) suggest that coherent reform goals that are

closely linked to either teachers' own goals, goals they could easily agree with, and/or goals arising from teachers' perspective of schools will help make the reform more meaningful for implementers, and so contribute to their motivation to change. In this respect, the role of school leadership is seen as crucial in facilitating teachers to interpret policy and match it with their own needs as well as the goals and ethos of the school. This effort may provide teachers with greater ownership of policies and help them to identify better ways to achieve the intent of reform.

Finally, discrepancies in the CPD system emanate from the inefficient planning of programmes or activities and the existence of communication gaps amongst various divisions in the Ministry involved in providing CPD for teachers, have led to overlaps and confusion amongst teachers. Some teachers reported that they have participated in CPD regulated not only by the TED, the division designated to regulate teachers' CPD, but they also received training from other divisions. Although the involvement of various divisions in offering CPD for teachers appeared to be a positive effort, such orientation may cause setbacks if CPD planning among these divisions is not synchronised. A study on the reformation of teaching in China by Paine and Fang (2007) reported a similar finding. They note that the existence of several institutions responsible for teacher training caused overlaps and duplications in the production of graduates. Correspondingly, UNESCO's (2012) review of education policies in Malaysia indicates that ineffective coordination across divisions in the Ministry led to overlaps or gaps in reform actions and it was evident that these divisions work in silos. A recent study by Hamid (2017) on the implementation of the District Transformation Programme (DTP) in Malaysia, revealed that a similar situation still exists and that every individual organisation, whether be it a single school or a government agency, was working in isolation. Therefore, this orientation indicates that not only there are many layers of administration involved in the

implementation of policy but also the existence of various agencies involved in providing CPD appeared to have led teachers to have varying perceptions or understanding about the existing CPD system. Also, it is not surprising to see that teachers, being the last in the implementation chain; the role of teachers is poorly defined. It is, therefore, arguable that, in any reform context, coordination among the people involved in the reform process is critical towards achieving the desired results (Fullan, 2007).

7.2.2 Teachers' silent voices in decision-making

The gap between policy and practice became more obvious because "the strategies that are used do not focus on the things that will really make a difference" (Fullan, 1993: 46). The existence of this gap may be a result of the teachers' absence in the policy formulation stage although they are the main implementers of reform. A common perception held by the teachers in this research is that policies are always developed "at the top" and then "handed down" to them to implement. Such phenomenon has been observed by many scholars of educational change (Fullan and Hargreaves, 1992; Fullan, 2001; Carl, 2002) and is very much common in highly top-down education systems (Crossley, 1990). On a slightly different perspective, based on her research on the involvement of policymakers in the bottom-up reform implementation in Oakland, California, Honig (2004: 554) suggests that:

> policymakers [use] implementers' decisions rather than policymakers' preferences as guides for implementation support. In this conceptualisation, policymakers do not simply carry out implementers' decisions. Rather, they work with implementers to make sense of implementers' goals, strategies, and experiences and which resources, policies, and other supports might enable implementation. This sense-making stage is essential, particularly given the ambiguity inherent in [policy] interpretation and translation.

This means that offering teachers the opportunities to collaborate and participate in decision-making may develop a greater supportive culture for change (Zimmerman, 2006) because teachers would have the opportunities to include what they consider is most pertinent to their work and practice. Further, they would also be able to identify the best possible ways for successful implementation of change within the boundaries of their realities.

While the voice of teachers has been recognised to contribute significantly to understanding how policy is implemented, it is still barely heard (Smit, 2005). This study found that teachers' involvement in the development of the PPPB policy is limited to merely providing feedback after the policy has been finalised. This implies that "'expertise' in judgement and decision-making is seen to reside outside schools, to be conferred in a hierarchical way to those inside schools" (Dadds, 2014: 9). Although decisions on CPD contents and activities were still regulated and determined by the school, this indicates that teachers still lack the autonomy in making CPD decisions. This is a further indication that teachers are still very much confined within both the traditional and top-down model in which CPD is delivered from the centre, assuming that they require support from an external authority (Sandholtz, 2002). Sandholtz (2002: 816) who interviewed 24 teachers from four schools in the USA, used "adult workplace learning" context to examine professional development opportunities, found that within the traditional model of CPD, teachers are viewed as a passive participant of their own learning, "much less as a source of knowledge".

Furthermore, the demand of fostering best practices from other systems, however, may offer benefits, indirectly, constraining the teachers' ability to work out their own remedy to improve teaching and learning and keep on limiting teachers' professional decisions regarding their CPD planning. In this situation, governments usually require teachers to engage with a prescribed model of CPD that aims to help them learn or adopt a certain method or programme. Nevertheless, it

was not expected that teachers themselves would prefer to be engaging with the top-down CPD approach provided by the Ministry. In fact, for some teachers, their preference was due to their lack of knowledge in planning their own professional growth. Teachers tend to work in individually and lack the opportunities to make observation of their colleagues or discuss their pedagogical practice, resulting in their CPD needs being overshadowed by school needs. Another possible explanation for such an attitude is that the policy has been designed in such a way that makes sense to policymakers but not to classroom teachers. Rather than making an effort to better understand the policy, teachers simply resigned themselves to abide by the Ministry's directives.

7.2.3 Conflicts between teachers' needs and institutional demands

When a system is launched on a journey of reform, teachers and schools will be bombarded with countless innovations waiting to be implemented, one after another, and sometimes happening simultaneously, demanding rapid actions and results. In such a situation, there are various needs that teachers, in particular, must address so as to meet the exigencies of reform. Although the PPPB policy emphasises and promotes self-initiated CPD as a means to fulfil teachers' individual professional needs, instantaneously, they are still obligated to realise the needs of the Ministry and the school. Notwithstanding, it was mentioned in Chapter 5 that there are four types of CPD needs that teachers must fulfil: teachers' personal, professional needs, school needs, student learning and pedagogical needs and the needs of the Ministry (see Table 5.3). The unclear articulation of how teachers should fulfil these needs as part of the implementation of the new CPD system have further contributed to the disagreement between policy intention and translation. The existing literature shows that such requirements are also relevant to teachers

in other contexts and has led to conflicts in their professional needs. Hustler et al., (2003) conducted a large-scale study on teachers' perceptions following a new CPD reform in the United Kingdom and reported that teacher CPD is subjected to institutional needs as compared to individual needs. Congruent to this study, Burns (2005) asserts that teachers found it difficult to align their own beliefs and values or to confront the expectations dictated by external authorities within these underlying conflicts of needs. Thus, a possible solution is to show teachers the means to prioritise these needs because identifying needs and having control of their own development is part of what it means to be a professional (Day, 1997). In other words, teachers should be given more opportunities to exercise their professional judgements and decide what is best for their professionalism. Nevertheless, within a highly-centralised, top-down education system, the feasibility of this solution is arguable as teachers have insufficient autonomy in their professional lives.

The findings of this study also highlighted some of the outcomes of this ambiguity regarding the gap between teachers' perceived needs in CPD and the purpose of reform. In their own words, the majority of teachers in this study participated in CPD because they needed "to keep themselves abreast with the latest information on education", they needed "to change their teaching methods", and they needed "to learn new skills and knowledge to improve students' learning". Their reasons for engaging in CPD indirectly justified the teachers' perceived needs to use their experiences in CPD to fulfil students' and pedagogical needs. However, the teachers' engagement in the CPD system sometimes reflected limited opportunities for such specific learning to occur. Quite frequently, teachers reported that contents of standardised CPD regulated by the school tended to focus on reform agendas, policies, curriculum and examinations rather than on their personal, professional development or pedagogical needs.

Research related to teachers' CPD experiences report greatly on problems teachers encounter in their CPD engagement. Flores (2005), for example, claims that standardised CPD neglects individual teacher development needs because of its top-down and mandated nature and does not consider teachers' existing beliefs, experiences, knowledge and needs. This is because standardised CPD activities, often through a 'one-size-fits-all' model (Livingston, 2012) is designed to correspond with the professional standards prescribed through performance indicators set by governments (Burns, 2005). Within such arrangements it is unsurprising therefore to witness teachers' diverse experiences, practices and needs ignored and directed instead towards the institutional needs.

Nonetheless, external regulation generates negative impressions about CPD among teachers (Hustler et al., 2003), because often, centralised CPD results in teachers' lack of autonomy in determining their personalised CPD needs and their experiences tend to be overlooked despite it being a significant resource for individual learning (Flores, 2005). This gap was also shown by Raza (2010) in her study on the influence of CPD on teachers of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) working in national universities in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). She indicates that when institutional needs are prioritised, "knowledge tends to be transmitted rather than collectively explored and disseminated" (Raza, 2010: 172), resulting in teachers' personal, professional development needs being peripheral. It is, therefore, crucial for policymakers to construct policy guidelines for professional development parallel to the teachers' needs for positive changes to occur. Indeed, there must be a balance to match the goals of the Ministry, school and students while considering the needs of the teachers and their contextual realities as well.

7.2.4 Underestimation of teachers' contextual realities

Top-down education systems, according to Wedell (2009), tend to underestimate teachers' contextual realities in their design for innovation which results in teachers' needs often being overlooked and one of the principal reasons for the absence of success in educational change initiatives. Current and past literature has identified that the same reason has also led to frustration and demotivation among teachers (Van Den Berg, 2002; Day et al., 2007; Addison and Brundrett, 2008; Han and Yin, 2016). In this section, I will highlight two contextual factors that appear to have been underestimated by policymakers when developing the PPPB policy local realities and the role of school leaders as the mediators of change.

Local realities

Throughout this thesis, it has been noted that the PPPB policy encourages teachers to be more involved in self-initiated CPD and requires teachers to transform their CPD practice. In plain terms, teachers are urged to be less dependent upon centralised training, structure their own professional development plan and become reflective practitioners. Unfortunately, however, such intended changes do not arise directly because of a written policy document as change rests on what individuals who are the closest to the change do and think (Fullan, 2007). So, the failure to acknowledge schools as the principal sites for change efforts will likely result in resistance by teachers.

The findings in Chapter 6, demonstrated the effect of contextual barriers that teachers encountered when it came to change the way they engaged in CPD (see Section 6.8.3). Among the barriers reported were heavy workloads, time constraints and limited school support. The lack of consideration given by policymakers to these barriers may also affect teachers during the policy development stage which resulted in teachers responding negatively to the policy and its implementation.

In the Chinese context, a study by Wan (2011) on primary school teachers' views towards a CPD policy in Hong Kong arrived at similar findings. She found that the two main inhibitors of teachers' participation in CPD are heavy workload and time constraints. A similar situation is also found within the British context. Goodall et al., (2005) evaluated the impact of CPD and discovered that financial cost, teaching duties, transport and time were identified as obstacles to CPD. Likewise, Al-Lamki (2009) who examined the relationship between English teachers' beliefs and CPD engagements in a top-down and wide-ranging reform showed that the obstacles mentioned above were also present in Omani schools.

Although the above contexts vary, the barriers to teachers' willingness to implement CPD related changes are similar. Policymakers may have been, like Wedell (2009: 44) said, "so blind to their own cultures" causing the barriers to policy implementation to be ignored in their decision-making. In other words, he questions the policymakers for their inability to incorporate such local realities into the policies they wrote although some of them used to be teachers and have been through multiple reforms. On this note, policymakers and reform planners appear to be deceiving themselves, assuming that it is optional to deliberate the impact of change on those involved in the implementation process, especially the teachers. Hence, to stop policymakers and reform designers from continually being blind to the existing educational culture and local realities, they need to start communicating directly with teachers and observe their realities (Wedell, 2009) and focus on supporting the people that matter most in the reform process.

The role of school leaders as the mediators of change

In the context of this study, the local change leaders refer particularly to the principal, deputy principal and senior teachers who hold administrative responsibilities. Within the current practice, CPD is

still regulated and determined by these school leaders. Although annually, teachers are given a chance to inform schools about their individual needs, often the decisions to fulfil these CPD needs are made collectively by the school leaders. This orientation normally resulted in 'one-size-fits-all' CPD, episodic, fragmented form of professional development, in which teachers may not always find it relevant to the real problems associated with classroom practice. Frequently, all teachers in this research pointed out that they were required to attend a minimum of seven-days mandated CPD which involved whole-day or half-day training on topics decided by school leaders and delivered by external authorities. Despite the implementation of the various CPD policies, this model of CPD continues to be widely used in Malaysia and elsewhere, profoundly established within matters related to organisation, management, and resource provision.

Even though the PPPB policy is targeted for both teachers and school leaders, policymakers appear to have overlooked the crucial role of school leaders in the implementation process. Interviews with policymakers showed that school leaders were provided with brief if not minimal training about the policy immediately after it was launched. Further, they were required to deliver and implement the policy accordingly in their respective schools. With limited information other than what was stated in the policy document, school leaders were offered little choice but to pass on the directives from the Ministry to the teachers. This somehow conveys a negative connotation to teachers of the way the school leaders communicate information and value change. In this respect, teachers might see school leaders as not having better knowledge than they currently do of the kind of change that is expected of them.

According to Wedell (2009: 40), "the leaders' role is central to almost every aspect of implementation. In their own institutions, leaders represent the 'bridge' between national policy and how it is experienced by the implementers–their staff". Lunenberg and Ornstein

(2004) in contrast, see principals as key in shaping the culture in a school and in a significant position to foster or impede the growth of the teacher learning culture in their school (Mclaughlin and Talbert, 2006). In this regard, it is necessary for those in power to aid school leaders in thoroughly understanding what is expected of them and to provide proper support to make appropriate local plans.

Research on educational leadership acknowledges principals' instructional leadership as a key factor influencing teachers' work and students' learning (Blase and Blase, 1999; Leithwood et al., 2006; Honig; 2012). In her research of three urban districts' engagement in supporting principals with instructional leadership, Honig (2012) found that the support from central office administrators is vital to promote principal learning. Similarly, Augustine et al. (2009) reported that the kind of support principals receive from central office administrators through CPD provided by the district are always job-embedded and closely related to instructional leadership duties such as classroom observation and the interaction with teachers. Such support, according to them, is beneficial in helping principals improve school effectiveness and deal with the pressures of change. Thus, the role of school leaders as the mediators of change should be taken seriously and adequate support for them to execute their role efficiently should be included in the strategies for the implementation of change. Without having the proper knowledge, skills and support, "it will be very difficult for any leader to know how to adjust the detail of the implementation to meet their institutional realities while still retaining the spirit of the change" (Wedell, 2009: 39).

In brief, the discussion above has demonstrated that due to some inter-related issues, the real intentions for reform in teacher CPD were not conveyed to the relevant stakeholders as it was initially formulated and intended. This may be attributed to how information is disseminated to the organisations within the hierarchical context of the education system and to the teachers as the core implementers. The

distinct views of the policymakers and teachers toward the implementation of the PPPB policy were helpful in presenting a broader perspective of how the policy was initially disseminated from the central level to the schools. The discussion, thus far, has shown that policy intention-implementation gap emerges from the distance between policymakers, located within the Ministry of Education departments, and implementers in schools.

7.3 CPD Models Shape Teachers' Sense of Professionalism

Malaysia has created her own teacher CPD model through the formulation of the PPPB policy. This model, as described in Chapter 5, generally aims at transforming teachers' CPD practice. This transformation refers to a change not only in terms of teachers' behavioural aspect of professionalism but also in their functional development. In other words, the new CPD system aspires to see teachers being responsible for their own professional growth. In the context of Australia, Sachs (2003) suggests that the demand for such transformation is not only aiming at changing the form of CPD that is offered to teachers but also the kind of professionalism deemed fit by the government. Looking closely at teachers' perceptions of the implementation of the PPPB policy and their CPD engagement, the study found that the types of CPD model teachers subscribe to influences their sense of professionalism. This section considers the value placed by teachers on continuing their professional development based on the new model and the consequence this has had on their professional practice.

7.3.1 Relationship between CPD and professionalism

The reviewed literature highlighted the fact that there are various interpretations of CPD and there is no standardised and agreed definition of the term (Day and Sachs, 2004; Bubb and Earley, 2007; Evans, 2008). Despite this, teachers imply that CPD is significant for

them as it is part of their role as professionals which has enabled them to improve the quality of their practice and thus fulfil the professional obligations of their profession. For them, the involvement in CPD means, they are committed to developing their professional capabilities with the goal of enriching students' learning experience and keeping themselves abreast with the most up-to-date trends in education as well as to ensure that their pedagogical skills remain relevant to the various needs of the students.

In so doing, to enable teachers to contribute towards improving education quality, in the Blueprint, through Shift Four, the Government proposed that the quality of CPD is to be upgraded from 2013 and teachers are to start planning for their own CPD throughout their careers (Ministry of Education, 2013). Within this aspiration, the Government believes that through CPD, teachers will continuously build their skill levels against the proposed professional standards stated in the PPPB policy. This aspiration is congruent with what Hargreaves (1994: 436) said: "to improve schools, one must be prepared to invest in professional development; to improve teachers, their professional development must be set within the context of institutional development". However, the investment or strategies to achieve the intended change, thus far, appear to have not made visible impacts on teachers' CPD practice, let alone a shift in their sense of professionalism.

A possible reason for this argument is, the CPD that teachers subscribe to is not tailored to the reform agenda. In this respect, coordination between the content of CPD and the way it is being delivered is crucial (Villegas-Reimers, 2003). Also, "the nature and specificity of the reforms and associated CPD may be critical determinants of success" (Bolam and McMahon, 2004: 36), indicating the importance for CPD related to the reform agenda to focus on a student-centred teaching and lifelong learning (Spark and Hirsh, 1997; Day and Sachs, 2004). However, much of the evidence in this study

points to the fact that teachers tend to engage with CPD in which Evans (2002; 2008) termed as CPD for functional development as compared to CPD for attitudinal development. Functional development focuses on the improvement in individuals' achievement and is typically acquired consistent with government requirements (see Chapter 3, Section 3.3.3).

Teachers frequently mentioned that they participated in fragmented, piecemeal CPD and training which were often conducted away from the school and delivered by external experts. In relation to school-based CPD, it was typically oriented towards the transmission of skills and knowledge to the entire school staff. These activities are consistent with the characteristics of the 'transmissive' model of CPD advocated by Kennedy (2005; 2014) which she claims results in teachers subscribing to controlled and compliant professionalism.

Furthermore, the ability to participate or not to participate in CPD was observed to be facilitated by the school leaders and was a result of the drive to provide equal CPD opportunities for all teachers. Indeed, it appeared to be that school leaders still consider this CPD model as the most effective and economical method to provide a large number of teachers with professional learning (Day and Sachs, 2004) resulting in such top-down, one-size-fits-all training model to remain dominantly popular in schools (Webb, 2010) and contribute to standardised teacher professionalism. It was, therefore, foreseen to hear comments from teachers that they did not learn much from their CPD engagement, reflecting that their personal, professional needs were not matched to their level of knowledge, experience or career stage as these were decided instead by external experts (Day and Sachs, 2004) (see Chapter 6, Section 6.8.2).

The lack of autonomy in making a professional judgement about CPD, along with imposed decisions regarding their pedagogical practices have, in turn, denied teachers' with the opportunity to experience autonomous professionalism. This results in "some analysts

to argue that de-professionalisation, rather than altered professionalism, has been the outcome of marketisation" (Evans, 2008: 21). Similarly, this study suggests that the constant demands imposed on teachers stemmed from the Government's ambition to improve education quality, particularly in the international student assessment as a strategy to ensure the nation continues to be competitive in the international market. Granting that the autonomy to engage in CPD is beneficial to their practice and relevant to their specific needs, it may empower teachers to develop a positive influence in the broader school environment. A comparative research on the association between autonomy and teachers' CPD in Germany and Sweden carried out by Wermke (2011) supports this notion. He argues that the idea of an autonomous teaching profession in the long run could be an advantageous trade-off for teachers, even if imposed professionalism appears to provide ideally much more opportunities for them to work and grow. In other words, allowing teachers the autonomy to identify CPD which is beneficial to their personalised needs could help to promote greater voluntary involvement in their professional learning.

In summary, the traditional model of teacher CPD adopted by policymakers is argued to have ineffectively fulfilled the teachers' personalised learning needs or contributed to the collaborative-activist professionalism intended by the reform agenda. This argument, in turn, requires elaboration on how professional development could be employed as a mechanism to articulate the link to intended teachers' professionalism.

7.3.2 Teacher CPD versus teacher professional learning

A fundamental part of the recent education reform is the responsibility of teachers to alter the way they engage in CPD. However, the strategies to realise the expected change conflicted with the goals of change aspired by the Ministry. The traditional model of

CPD as discussed in the previous sections produces a result in contrast to the primary purpose for teacher reform. The CPD opportunities reported by the teachers are standardised and mandatory for all teachers which added more to their existing workload and occurred only sporadically. Within such a climate, it is not surprising to see some teachers prefer decisions to be made for them. Teachers agree to prescribed learning as an indication of their passive involvement in professional development, notably mandated CPD. This group of teachers do not see themselves as being self-directed learners, thus, resisted the notion of self-initiated CPD. Little (2001: 31) argues that much of the literature of educational reform has recognised the fact that "reform might more productively be seen as a problem of learning than as a problem of implementation", which indirectly points to the importance of teachers' capacity to carry out reform efforts individually and collectively.

In this respect, CPD approaches should be directed at preparing teachers to be active and effective participants in education reform efforts (Little, 1993; OECD, 2016); indicating that teacher professionalism is shaped within "an evidence-based understanding of effective learning, providing teachers with a rich repertoire of teaching strategies, and fostering collaborative practice" (OECD, 2013: 11). Parallel to the constantly changing demands of globalisation, teachers are expected to advocate lifelong learning along with the increasing demands of accountability and performativity (Watson and Fox, 2015). Watson and Michael (2016: 268) suggest that "a shift from CPD to professional learning starts to undo these signifying knots and necessitates the local emergence of new practices, new rules and changed routines". Put differently, the trend of teacher CPD seems to be supporting the view of teachers being responsible for their own self-growth and learning, moving towards democratic professionalism.

So, what sort of CPD supports the development of teachers' attitudinal development and reflective practice and professionalism?

Scholars suggest models such as coaching and communities of practice as valuable in facilitating attitudinal changes (Evans, 2002; Fraser et al., 2007; Kennedy, 2005; 2014). The communities of practice model serve the purpose of continuous professional learning of its members and provide teachers in Singapore, for example, with opportunities and provisions in CPD including lesson study, action research and learning circles on various topics (Bautista et al., 2015: 320). Through these CPD models, "the existence of individual knowledge and the combinations of several individuals' knowledge through practice, is seen as a powerful site for the creation of new knowledge" (Kennedy, 2005: 244).

Also, coaching, being an element of communities of practice "enables individuals and teams to develop and flourish, to take responsibility for their own learning and to achieve their goals" (Powell et al., 2001: 4). Peer-coaching usually occurs in "the form of in-class support used to provide teachers with feedback on their own practice to stimulate self-reflection" (Rhodes and Beneicke, 2002: 298). The engagement in the coaching culture assists teachers in the translation of professional development into having a greater impact on job performance (ibid). Specifically, the potential benefits of coaching to teachers include improved self-confidence through reciprocal support offered by peers (Lieberman and Miller, 2000); teachers are granted greater ownership of professional development rather than imposition by others (Downey, 2001) and teacher learning directly impacts more on pupil learning (Swafford, 1998). Accordingly, coaching might contribute to a greater understanding and confidence among teachers on how to better implement the PPPB policy according to their school contexts and their individual needs. Through coaching sessions, teachers will more likely learn how to adapt to changes and reflect upon the decisions they have made as part of the policy implementation process. Reflecting on the discussion above and the findings of this study, the CPD strategies used to transform teachers' sense of

professionalism within the collaborative-activist dimension proposed in the PPPB policy, however, is limited. Teachers infrequently spoke of their participation in coaching and communities of practice despite acknowledging the benefits of these models of CPD. Day (2017: 84) argues that within contemporary situations of education nowadays and in the predictable future, it is crucial for governments to take serious consideration of the "complexities of teachers' work and lives, and how principles of professionalism are enshrined in CPD activities". In this respect, the Ministry's effort in listing various forms of CPD and providing guidelines on how to partake in these CPD activities do not necessarily result in teachers' change of attitudes nor transform their practice. Often, CPD in schools remains to be as Elmore (2002: 10) said:

> Nothing more than a collection of teachers' individual activities over the course of a year, without a general design or specific focus that relates particular activities to an overall strategy or goal.

What seems to be absent in the literature are the ways how teachers should and could be supported by changing the way they learn. Elmore's (2002) argument suggests that without understanding the entire purpose of teacher reform, specifically in the kind of professional learning teachers are urged to engage in; they will continue to "struggle to seek a sense of coherence, worth and belonging in their work" (Day, 2017: 85). This may thereby hinder teachers' commitment and willingness to accept the dedication to the new learning culture expected of them.

Also, evidence from the PPPB policy shows that reduced resources and devolving responsibilities to schools and teachers in regulating CPD "gives rise to a competitive ethos rather than a collaborative one" (Sachs, 2001: 156). As a consequence, teachers' individual learning needs often contradict those required by their

schools and external authorities. Additionally, it may be difficult to reconcile these needs, particularly in the context where teachers are urged to be autonomous while simultaneously they are under escalating pressures from an accountability system that emphasises measurable standards (Sachs, 2001; Elmore, 2002). On this note, the notion of self-initiated and personalised CPD is used by the Ministry as a facade to legitimise a selected set of policy actions. Although the Ministry aspires to see teachers change their views and attitudes towards professional development and learning, the forms of CPD and accountability measures imposed upon teachers result in teachers remaining within the controlled-compliant professionalism instead of the anticipated collaborative-activist professionalism. Thus, for this to change, teachers should be offered appropriate assistance so that they can embrace a new culture of professional learning (Evans, 2011).

In the next section, I suggest an alternative model of CPD to support the development of teachers' new practices and encourage a shift in their attitudinal development.

7.4 What can Malaysia Learn from the Global Top Performers?

It has been discussed extensively in Chapter 3 that Malaysia has been observing other countries and policy borrowing has been used as a mechanism to improve the quality of its education system. In particular, Singapore and Finland have been referenced for their ongoing outstanding performance in the international student assessments. Looking closely at these two high-performing systems, aspects of professional development and learning strategies for their teachers are taken into consideration in suggesting an alternative model of CPD for the Malaysian teaching workforce. This section presents suggestions on how to gradually make changes to teacher learning culture by focusing on adapting the approaches used in Singapore and elsewhere.

7.4.1 Changing teacher learning culture in Malaysia

It is arguable that teaching is not a static skill as it has to continually be enhanced to suit the constant innovations in education together with the diverse needs of the students. This effort then requires teachers to be appropriately supported in moving through a dynamic learning process which is parallel with the intended, system-wide change. Hoban (2002: 39) notes that:

> The bottom line is that efforts for educational change need a long-term approach to support teachers through the non-linear process of change requiring the schools to be reconceptualised as learning environments for their teachers.

In this vein, Hoban (2002) argues that information regarding teacher professional learning is insufficiently theorised. Similarly, the literature also recognises that the varying definitions of CPD have contributed to the confusion between the interpretations of CPD and teacher professional learning. Possibly, this is one of the reasons for the lack of visible change in teachers' CPD practice despite the implementation of the PPPB policy. The missing link between CPD approaches and the intention of the reform agenda, thus, require some modifications to the existing model of teacher professional development in Malaysia. Without a proper amendment to the current CPD practice, it is difficult to witness attitudinal change and a shift in professionalism in the teaching workforce.

The idea of requesting teachers to make changes to their existing learning practice may be difficult as this adjustment requires them to be flexible and open to innovations. Teachers have been, for many years, exposed to CPD models which regards them as "an uncritical implementer of outside policy" (Dadds, 2014: 10). Therefore, it is not surprising for teachers to view themselves as facilitators for transmitting change rather than as learners. For these teachers, CPD approaches should now focus on teacher learning. "It is remit is not

just about a teacher's' classroom but rather about social change, where education is the driving force" (Sachs, 2007: 9). Learning should be made the main priority for them, and efforts to foster and develop the habits of learning should be embedded in future teacher CPD activities (Coombs and Sorenson, 2010). Tripp (2004: 192) clearly captures this vision. He contends:

> Achieving changed learning requires teacher change, for it is difficult to imagine teachers who are unable to work in teams would be able to help their students to do collaborative work effectively, or how teachers do not reflect in order to continuously improve their practice could help students become effective lifelong learners.

Similarly, Sandholtz (2002: 816) suggests that by injecting adult learning theories in the activities, teachers will be able to see learning through the constructivist view: "as a personal, reflective, and transformative process where ideas, experiences, and points of view are integrated, and knowledge is created". She further notes that:

> When a constructivist perspective is applied to learning, a key focus becomes how teachers learn to make critically reflective judgments in the midst of action and how they subsequently change their actions in response to new insights (ibid).

If a CPD programme or activity neglects the value of instilling the habits of learning in transforming individual practice and developing their capabilities, teachers will continue to acquire individually directed skills development and the teaching workforce will remain, mere technicians, complying to governments' demands. Hence, CPD activities that support the individual construction of meaning and knowledge must be made available for the teachers.

7.4.2 The alternative CPD model

To begin with, the Ministry must resist from merely using traditional models of CPD such as one-off seminars or programmes designed by external experts when planning professional development for teachers. Instead, the focus should now shift to Kennedy's (2014) suggestion that different forms of CPD can be used within a system for different purposes. For the alternative model to be of benefit to Malaysian teachers, the enabling factor would be "applying leverage on the experiential and tacit knowledge of teachers to move away from the current competencies-based training approach to teacher professional development" (Tripp, 2004: 193). Coherent with the goal to improve the percentage of teachers participating in self-initiated and personalised CPD, transformative models support the capacity of teachers to exercise professional autonomy. However, Kennedy (2014) cautions that "this autonomy is only ever transformative if it is translated into an agency; that is, it must be enacted in some way to make a positive change to practice". Put another way, efforts to encourage teacher learning must be accompanied by proper strategies that can contribute to teachers as active agents in and of their work, change the learning culture in schools and think differently about CPD.

A strategy that could be applied to support this alternative model of CPD is by warranting specific time within teachers' school contact hours for collaboration. In their letter to the President of the United States, Lieberman and Pointer Mace (2008: 227) plead that the authority provides:

> …teachers with continuous blocks of time devoted to a variety of ways for teachers to teach teachers the strategies that have been successful with their own students, using technology to illustrate good teaching, and building networks of teacher communities where teacher leaders can provide such professional development with their colleagues.

Due to the existing nature of teachers being compliant to directives from the authority, such an approach appears to be necessary to ensure that schools do not use time-constraints as an excuse for not utilising teacher collaboration for professional development. A similar strategy is used in Singapore whereby it is compulsory for all schools to deploy the PLC model to encourage collaboration among teachers and leaders in the same school (Bautista et al., 2015).

Moreover, following the strategy used in Singapore through adopting Teacher Network Learning Circles (TNLC), the seven-days mandated CPD for civil servants in Malaysia, which is equal to 42 hours of CPD per year, could be incorporated in the schools' timetable to conduct CPD using the alternative model. Based on the studies by Hairon (2008), Tripp (2004) and Tang (2000) on TNLC, Singaporean teachers engage in eight 2-hour collegial sessions. These sessions accumulate towards the 100 hours of their yearly training entitlement which occur between 4 to 12 months. Hairon (2008) reveals that although there were hiccups along the implementation of such an approach, this strategy proves to have potential to empower teachers and improve their professional learning.

Also, a very notable change that made the difference in the teacher CPD in Singapore is its bottom-up approach towards innovation (Hairon, 2008). Importantly, it was the introduction of the 'Thinking Schools, Learning Nation' agenda that brought about the whole-system change and redefined the teachers' role in Singapore. Furthermore, it was the system that acknowledged "the need for a type of professional development that encourages and affords teachers to initiate change in matters of both professional development and classroom teaching and learning" (Hairon, 2008: 5). This statement means that to turn schools into learning organisations, the Ministry must first be a learning organisation itself and through CPD, the Ministry must assist schools in becoming learning organisations themselves.

Though it is extensively recognised that in the change process, changing the attitudes of actors and their culture is complicated and demanding, it is still the key to becoming a learning organisation (Stolls and Kools, 2017). In their analysis of the literature related to learning, organisational change, school improvement and effectiveness through nine electronic databases, Stolls and Kools (2017: 13) discovered that the "ability to challenge the status quo" requires appropriate strategies. They suggest that organisations should be offered "stimulus and practical guidelines on how [they] might support and use learning at all levels to improve and transform themselves into a [learning organisation] LO and ultimately enhance outcomes" (Stolls and Kools, 2017: 2). In this way, the learning culture could be fostered among the bureaucrats at the Ministry as well and not only amongst teachers. Policymakers, education officials, school leaders and teachers could be provided with examples of successful learning organisation practices within various contexts to change the habits of the mind and cultivate the culture of reflexive, lifelong learners.

Nevertheless, the extent of this strategy to be part of a whole system change is still arguable. If CPD involves only the actors who are already in the system, much work is still indispensable to ensure that everyone is on the same page and shares a common learning culture. Perhaps, such an effort should begin with initial teacher education as it is in the context of Finland. Teacher education in Finland is well-known for its comprehensive and "rigorous research-based programmes that prepare teachers in content, pedagogy and educational theory as well as the capacity to do their own research" (Sahlberg, 2010: 8). This approach is in alignment with Stolls and Kools' (2017) finding that school as learning organisations need 'inquiry mindsets'. They argue that:

> The inquiry is fundamental to professional growth, and to decisional capital; making informed decisions about learning, teaching and children gives professionals confidence, competence, insight, sound judgement and the ability to adapt (Stolls and Kools, 2017: 9).

Put another way; the learning culture could be initiated during the teacher preparation phase. This idea also suggests that there is a need for "a carefully planned and phased pedagogical paradigm shift" that is ongoing, starting from early teacher training throughout their teaching career (Coombs and Sorenson, 2010: 686).

In consideration of the analysis of relevant official documents and the PPPB policy, along with teachers' perceptions of its initial implementation, an alternative model that complements the PPPB model of CPD is much needed to support the system-wide change aspired by the Ministry. There is so much that could be learned from Singapore's experience in their radical approach to teacher reform. The changes too did not simply occur overnight. Despite all the provisions and resources ready to support Singaporean teachers in their professional development, there are shortcomings and challenges imperative for consideration if Malaysia is to adapt their approach. Among others, Tripp (2004) asserts that the biggest challenge was the issue with the mindset of school leaders which were primarily grounded in industrial, efficiency-driven concepts and processes. There was also a shortage of good facilitators resulting in superficial forms of collegiality among teachers. Along with this problem, the training process of these facilitators is slow, time-consuming and expensive as it involves advanced techniques for reflection and inductive theorising of knowledge (ibid). Furthermore, Bautista et al. (2015) note that the problems that obstruct teachers from attending collaborative CPD include accessibility, the overwhelming amount of work and high stakes examinations due to its highly competitive and selective education system.

As Malaysia has been closely looking at Singapore for the recipe of their exceptional success in positioning the country among the top-third countries in TIMSS and PISA, perhaps, adapting the strengths of their approach through an alternative model of CPD that complements the strategies of the PPPB policy may be a possibility. This would begin to create a teacher learning culture in Malaysian schools, thus, shift their sense of professionalism towards becoming collaborative-activist practitioners. However, this should be carried out with caution. Despite obvious comparisons in terms of their geographical location and culture, there are differences between Malaysia and Singapore that may impede transferability of the core ideas and practices. For example, a comparative study conducted by Thien and Ong (2015: 11) on the affective qualities of Singaporean and Malaysian students' achievement in Mathematics in the PISA 2012, reveals that "education opportunity with relatively high quality and equity seems not equally distributed for students from different socioeconomic backgrounds between Malaysian schools". They attributed this outcome to the size of Malaysia being 330 times larger and the number of people which is six times more than Singapore, it is challenging for Malaysia to implement educational policies effectively (ibid).

Also, other than making implementation of policies easier, being a relatively small nation, Singapore has the privilege to offer integrated, coherent and well-funded professional development for its teachers. All teachers receive initial training at the country's National Institute of Education (NIE), the one and only institution regulating teacher education and professional development in Singapore (Steward, n.d.). In comparison to Malaysia, more than 420,000 teachers undergo training and professional development regulated by various private and public institutions including several divisions at the Ministry, and they must compete to obtain the limited CPD funding available for them. It is, therefore, imperative for Malaysia to take precaution when adapting and adopting the approaches not only from

Singapore but other countries as well because cultural and contexts really matter in the policy innovation process (Crossley, 2010). Critical policy learning however can be facilitated through genuine dialogue between the Ministry of Education in Malaysia and the National Institute of Education in Singapore and critical engagement with international developments on policy borrowing and transfer (Philips and Schweisfurth, 2007). This could also be done by commissioning critical comparative studies that situate a comparison of outcomes and policies against a comparison of teacher vaues, knowledge and practice. Policymakers need to critically examine and question foreign policies planned to be adapted into their local contexts and not only depend on and agree with reports and recommendations made by international agencies such as the OECD and World Bank (Rizvi and Lingard, 2010; Grek, 2009). As noted by Crossley (2012: 9) policymakers "should not expect it [best practices] to provide a fixed blueprint for further implementation" and much is needed "for greater local capacity, engagement and control" to avoid uncritical policy transfer.

PPPB Model of CPD	Alternative Model of CPD
Top-down	Bottom-up
Large-scale	Small-scale
Centralised and school-based	Localised to individual schools
Hierarchical	Collegial
Contents fixed in the schools' CPD calendar	Contents based on teachers' emergent needs
Standardised to all teachers in the school	Customised to suit teachers' individual needs
Transmitted to all by external experts (often by SIP[9] and SISC[10])	Coached by SIP and SISC and facilitated by experts in the school (colleagues)
Self-initiated CPD based on individual and school needs	Self-initiated CPD based on individual needs with support from SIP and SISC
No fixed timetable within school contact hours	Fixed timetable within school contact hours
An occasional special event	An ongoing part of everyday practice
Compliance required and monitored	Implementation supported by SIP and SISC and self-evaluation by teachers

Table 7.1: Differences between the PPPB model of CPD and the suggested alternative model of CPD (adapted from Tripp, 2003; 2004).

To summarise, Table 7.1 illustrates the suggested modifications to the PPPB model as a means for an alternative model of CPD. In some ways, this table replicates the characteristics of managerialism versus democratic professionalism illustrated in Chapter 3 (see Table 3.1). The change in the way teachers engage with CPD would assist them in gradually shifting and moving in between discourses of professionalism. Indirectly, teachers are supported in the process of changing their professional development practice towards collective participation and a collegial learning culture.

[9] School Improvement Partner (SIP)
[10] School Improvement Specialist Coaches (SISC)

This model is also informed by learning organisations' principles, with some adaptations of the approaches used in Singapore (see Tripp, 2003; 2004). Singapore's model of schools as learning organisations seems to be more likely to resemble the kind of change that the Ministry desired to witness in teachers. The similar situation in Singapore where "changes are very large-scale and made all the more difficult by a history of strongly hierarchical thinking and bureaucratic processes" (Tripp, 2003: 479) made it a stronger reason to delve deeper into Singapore's success in educating a high-quality teaching workforce by adapting the model of schools as learning organisation into the Malaysian context.

At the heart of this adaptation, the change of practices from the left to the right-hand column means applying the alternative model to move schools more towards operating as a learning organisation while simultaneously fostering a collaborative-activist role and professionalism among teachers. In coherence with the work of Tripp (2003) which highlighted the use of action learning to inculcate autonomous, self-managed professionalism among teachers, the alternative model opts to use the existing PLC approaches outlined in the PPPB model, but with some modifications that appears to be a better fit for the intention of the current reform.

I propose that both teachers and school leaders be provided with suitable platforms for debates and negotiations particularly on matters related to school policies through a participatory decision-making process as a means to divert from the top-down, hierarchical CPD system. Hargreaves' (1999) suggestion on using 'top-down and bottom-up integration' to promote greater school democratisation (Apple and Beane, 1999) appears to be a possible medium to draw in more, the voice of teachers' into matters pertaining to decisions within and outside the classroom that affect their professional practice. Instead of conducting centralised and school-based CPD that involves the entire school staff, the alternative model suggests small-scale,

localised professional development to be carried out in individual schools based on the needs of groups of teachers in the schools. The collaborative professional inquiry and community of practice models could be conducted in smaller groups, for example, according to the subjects teachers are teaching. In this way, a more personalised CPD could be designed as the needs of the teachers are narrowed down. Teachers' interactions are more likely to be collaborative and collegial when they have shared priorities and understanding of their individual CPD needs and the needs of their students. It is essential to note that for such collaborative and collegial culture to be embedded into the school culture, the alternative model of CPD should be an ongoing part of the teachers' daily practice and not an occasional special event that occurs in a fragmentary manner. For this to work, it is suggested that initially, a fixed timetable for teachers to continually partake in the abovementioned CPD models must be incorporated into the teachers teaching hours. Over time, when this culture has received greater acceptance and is practised by teachers willingly, the fixed contact hours could be removed.

Another striking amendment to the existing PPPB model is to turn the transmission of knowledge and development by external experts often involving the districts' SIP and SISC, into facilitation of learning by experts within the schools. Put another way, this necessitates the teachers to be coached to adapt to the role of pedagogical experts. According to Stolls and Kools (2017), this could be realised through the promotion of team learning and collaboration among teachers. They suggest that team learning encourages collective learning shared among teachers which enhances PLC's collaborative cultures along with the notion of collegiality. They further emphasise:

> It is a form of collaboration more likely to lead to deeper learning and improvement as it creates greater interdependence, collective commitment, shared responsibility, and review and critique. Such

> 'deprivatisation' of practice as the PLC literature describes it or 'joint practice development' is a process of learning new ways of working through mutual engagement that opens up and shares practices with others." (Stolls and Kools, 2017: 9).

Following the approach in Singapore through their 'Learning Circles' facilitators, SIP and SISC could start by engaging some teachers in each school into action research to work together and identify strategies to resolve problems concerning pedagogical issues in the classroom (Hairon, 2008). Using the accumulated 42 hours of the annual, mandated CPD as the medium to conduct such learning would be the best approach to 'kick off' this method of professional learning in schools. Both the SIP and SISC will work with teachers to identify the resource person, behave as 'critical friends', and provide support for them to publish and present their research discoveries (ibid). When teachers are ready to adapt to the role of pedagogical experts, the responsibility for facilitating collaborative learning will gradually be handed over to them. In Singapore, this process occurs typically between a two to three-year period, and the position of internal experts are often rotated among teachers in the same school.

Besides, the adaptation of this approach also signals that the synergy with SIP and SISC could be expanded upon. Considering the fact that there are more than 420,000 teachers and over 10,000 schools in Malaysia (see Table 2.4), it may not be adequate and practical for each school only to have one good facilitator. The SIP and SISC will be exhausted if they are to be held responsible for coaching too many facilitators at a time. A possible solution to overcome this difficulty is by having at least two to three good facilitators at every school and then distribute the responsibility to coach their colleagues through the process of team learning. This suggestion is parallel with the current conception of collaborative professionalism (Wang et al., 2014) in which the learning process will not only involve scrutiny and feedback among teachers but also allowing them to reflect together on

issues related to student learning and work out the remedy for their practice. Additionally, such an approach also implies that the change in professionalism does not only affect teachers, but at the same time, the way professionalism is understood within SIP and SISC as well– signifying the deviation from transmissive CPD practice into transformative learning as a strategy to redefine the identity of the teaching profession as a whole.

Having set out an alternative model of CPD for Malaysia, the next section focuses on theorising how systems move from one model to another.

7.5 Transitioning between Models of CPD

The research findings highlight the changing expectations placed upon teachers in consequence of recent changes in their professional development and professionalism. These experiences, together with the demands to perform, have affected their attitudes towards policy and its implementation process. Along with a comprehensive analysis of the policy, the study demonstrates the relationship between the construction and implementation of policy which appeared to have impacted what it might mean to be a teacher in the context of reform. Moreover, how policy is communicated influences teachers' responses towards the purpose of the policy in particular and education reform as a whole.

Much information could be drawn from the analysis of CPD policies especially in interrogating the underpinning perspectives on teacher professionalism. The categories which differentiate the purpose of CPD models and examples of CPD activities that fit each category are observable characteristics in the Spectrum of CPD Models developed by Kennedy (2014) (see Table 3.2). Although the three categories are easily identified, the characteristics of each category are not readily determined as the CPD models suggest; how teacher professionalism changes or moves from one category into another is

overlooked, assuming that the process occurs linearly. Variables such as "events and experiences in the personal lives of teachers that are closely linked to the performance of their professional roles" (Day, 2002: 682) could have been taken into consideration when examining CPD policies and how the forms of CPD shaped teacher professionalism, thus complements the analysis of both policy and practice.

Furthermore, the spectrum of models illustrating the purposes of CPD appeared to be too simplistic and did not consider the complex nature of the teaching profession and was amended in the light of the research findings. This model is modified to include additional features that were recognised as having the likelihood to facilitate teachers to move in between and adapt to different discourses of professionalism through appropriate intervention and support. The revised model (see Figure 7.1 below) illustrates that the processes and practices affecting teachers' professionalism are not straightforward. The insertion of yellow arrows highlights the fact that teachers could be subscribing to various professionalism at the same time despite the forms of CPD they engaged with. While the different forms of CPD may contribute to the different versions of professionalism, teachers, however, cannot simply embrace one type of professionalism into another just by engaging in a particular form of CPD. Professionalism is not fixed or static, but changes depending on their individual contexts, allowing teachers to move within discourses of professionalism suitable to their working needs. Although teachers' capacity for professional autonomy and agency (green arrow) could be increased as they change from doing transmissive models of CPD into a malleable category and finally engaging in transformative models (Kennedy, 2014), this interchange process of professionalism does not happen simultaneously for all teachers. Some teachers may not have the capability or capacity to move from one professionalism into another and will require some kind of intervention and support either from the school or the authorities. Professional learning does not just reside in the individual, teams or

schools. Teachers may find it easier or harder to make the change. In this respect, the PPPB Model of CPD recognises this by allowing teachers to 'get stuck' at different levels so that they could adjust their professionalism to suit their roles and responsibilities. In short, the process of transitioning CPD models into another pointed to the untidiness of findings versus neat categorisations of frameworks, indicating that the reality of change is rarely clear-cut.

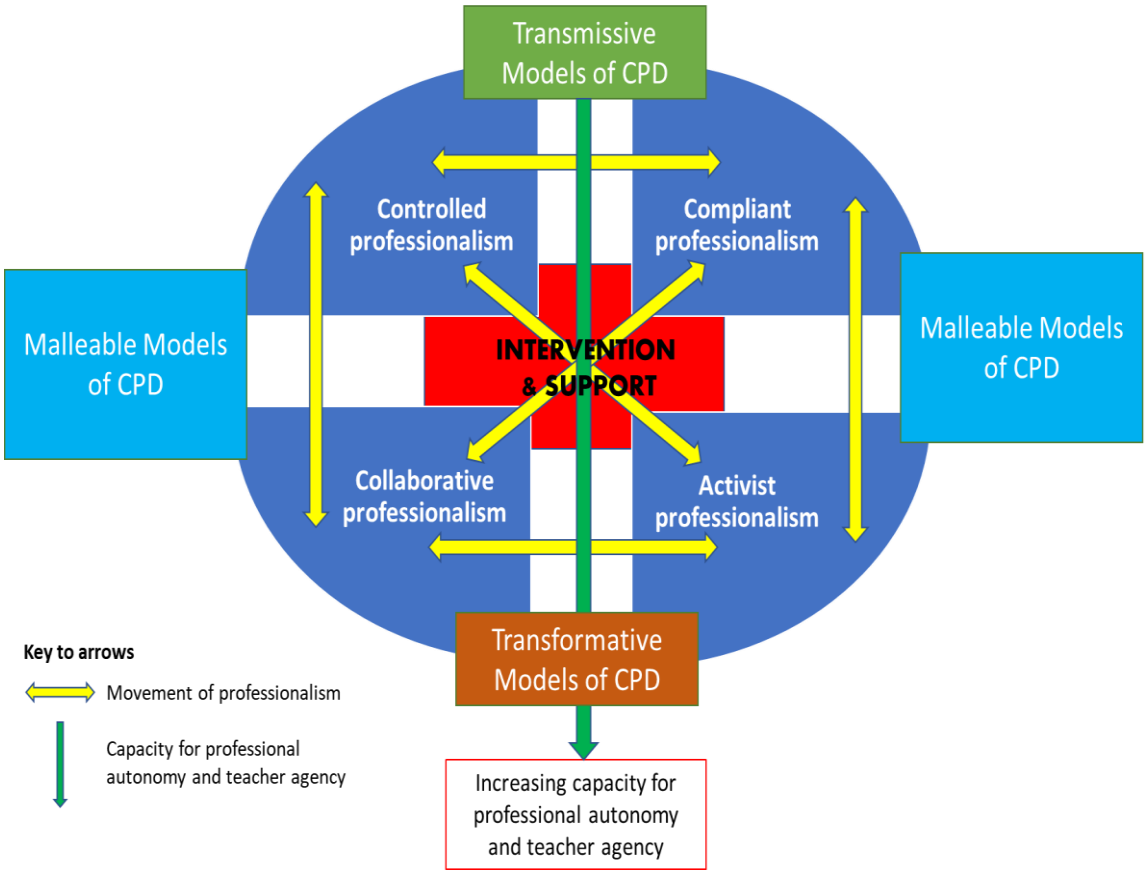


Figure 7.1: Transition of CPD models and teacher professionalism

Although the spectrum of models is useful in exploring the possible impact of "specific CPD models in terms of their capacity to support teacher autonomy" and how they influence teacher professionalism, it is equally important to consider the wider, systemic picture to further facilitate an "understanding of the ideological and political motivations" underpinning CPD policies (Kennedy, 2014: 694).

Incorporating Sachs' (2016) illustration on the dimensions of professionalism (see Figure 3.3) into the revised spectrum of models, provides a much clearer conceptual framework to interpret and understand the purposes of transmissive and transformative CPD models. In other words, by positioning the types of professionalism together with the purposes of existing CPD models available in the system, education stakeholders particularly policymakers, could use this revised model as a guideline to explore and evaluate components of CPD policies that appear inconsistent with the governments' direction of professionalism for the teaching workforce. This model is also helpful for teachers to determine the type of professionalism they subscribe to and identify the forms of CPD suitable for their personalised needs and the professionalism that defined them as a teacher because engagement with appropriate forms of CPD has the potential to impact on their attitudes and beliefs. School leaders, on the other hand, could use the revised model to plan and regulate continuous, collaborative and more focused forms of CPD based on the needs of a certain group of teachers in their schools.

A fundamental aspect of the recent CPD policy reform is the responsibility of teachers to plan personalised development for themselves and the need to change the professional learning culture in schools. However, the forms in which professional development opportunities are available at their schools did not necessarily facilitate teachers to initiate changes as anticipated by the policy. Other than providing teachers with the autonomy and 'trust' to identify CPD beneficial to their practice and related to their specific needs, appropriate intervention and support by the school and authorities would empower teachers to make sounder professional judgements. As such, making a suitable adjustment on the ways they engage with CPD, may generate positive outcomes on their individual and professional growth consistent with the direction of the wider education reform. In this way, although policy formulation and implementation

occur in a centralised, top-down fashion, like the context of this study, teachers could still make their own decisions regarding what forms of CPD and professionalism would best suit the realities of their working environment.

Another conclusion that could be drawn from the research is how national policies, implemented in schools by school leaders, affected teachers. The school leadership could either act as barriers or support for teachers, specifically in terms of their CPD engagement. As the 'bridge' between the authorities and the teachers (Wedell, 2009), the school leaders' role in managing the school environment, policy and structure in response to external demands such as education policies is extremely important. These policies disseminated in a top-down system often involved layers of communications in which messages are received and delivered by middle managers to school leaders and eventually to the teachers. In all forms of communication, there is the potential for many different interpretations. These indirect messages are dependent on the school leaders' understanding and interpretation which may cause the actual policy meaning to be altered or diluted when the teachers finally receive them. Furthermore, such orientation has the possibilities to have an adverse consequence on teachers' responses towards reforms of their practice. In this research, the school leaders' misinterpretation of the Ministry's suggestion for teachers to prepare a CPD profile as part of their performance evaluation is illustrative of the potential for misalignment between policy and practice. Thereby, causing teachers to be experiencing internal tension and conflict in their work (Cribb, 2009); which also have affected how they viewed and reacted towards policy innovations. This leads back to the central role of intervention and support by school leaders' and authorities shown in the middle of the dimensions of professionalism (see Figure 7.1) to serve as 'enablers' for teachers to embrace the kind of professionalism deemed fit by governments.

To summarise, this research demonstrates that the ways educational policies are implemented and imposed on teachers together with their experience of the process of change is having an adverse effect on teachers' professionalism and their professional roles and responsibilities (Ball, 1993; Sachs, 2001; Day, 2002). In their attempts to raise education quality, governments are more likely to impose mandates regarding the prior competencies required of teachers and use CPD as a component of reform which is derived from global education governance as it is portrayed as having the potential to alter teacher professionalism (Robertson and Sorenson, 2017). However, interrogation of policy using the conceptual framework illustrated in Figure 7.1 and teachers' experiences in the implementation process revealed that much of the elements of the existing CPD system still focuses on the behavioural component of professionalism, and the attitudinal component and intellectual professionalism did not seem to be valued or considered (Evans, 2011). Though governments may have determined on the kind of professionalism they think best suit the teaching profession, the CPD strategies used to realise the goal may not be consistent with the direction of the wider agenda of reform. This discrepancy was at the heart of the problem that teachers faced in this study; they struggled with the pursue of aligning their individual professionalism with the external demands for improving teaching and the overall education quality. As such, teachers are wedged in between their own aspirations to meet their personal and professional goals and the need to adhere to governments' directives.

7.6 Conclusion

The principal arguments of the research highlighted that the link between policy and practice is influenced by many interconnected issues arising from the hierarchical process of policy being implemented in a top-down manner. Among others, information is

more likely to be diluted or missing as policy is delivered from the top level to teachers at the school level, resulting in a diverse understanding and interpretation of policy outcomes. Teachers' working contexts and their personal expectations towards professional growth also generate conflicts as they struggle to meet their individual needs, students' needs and the demands of the Ministry and school. Additionally, this study highlights the extent to which professionalism can be shaped by the form of CPD that teachers' engaged with. The findings also highlight the potential damage affecting professionalism as a consequence of centralised government policy, and the impact this has had on their ability to perform their existing and expected roles efficiently.

In the main, the issue encountered by teachers is the fact that CPD policy and activities mainly focus on the behavioural component of professionalism. The failure to take into account teachers' attitudinal development within the policy and CPD system influenced their beliefs towards transforming their professional learning culture. Indirectly, this affects the way teachers felt about themselves and the education system in general. Thus, it is important for the system to attune the forms of CPD with teachers individual needs and the realities of their practice. An integral part of being a professional is the requirement to maintain a high level of proficiency within their field of practice, CPD should, therefore, be regarded as a key element of the process of re-professionalising teachers rather than a means of creating a culture of compliance and conformity. As Fisher et al. (2006: 4) remark, it is "not about making an industrial process more efficient; rather, it is about enabling cultural change in the profession".

Chapter 8
Conclusions and Recommendations

8.1 Introduction

In this final chapter, I concentrate on the policy implications, my personal insights on my own learning journey as a researcher and an educator and, the professional knowledge that I have gained from this research. The study has importantly, identified several implications that could be useful for the planning and development of policy related to teacher professional learning and other policies in the context of Malaysia or elsewhere. Likewise, suggestions and recommendations are pertinent to various education stakeholders including the Ministry, school leaders and teachers. In this chapter, the limitations of the study are identified, and priorities for future research are suggested at the conclusion of the chapter, along with my personal insights.

8.2 Implications for Policymaking

This study found that the Ministry proposes a CPD policy that considers the preconditions and needs for change in teachers' CPD engagement. It is also apparent in this study that the policy is officially planned within Shift Four of the Blueprint, but the Ministry concerns itself little with the implementation. Typical of the Model A policy process as mentioned in Chapter 3 (see Section 3.2.1), the policy implementation procedure was disconnected from the policy development process, without addressing the issue of sustainability of the policy. Throughout the interviews, teachers frequently referenced the policy as a prescribed agenda made elsewhere, yet they are the ones handed with the responsibility to realise it and are blamed if it fails. Furthermore, the policy authors mentioned several times that there was no particular time-frame for the implementation of the PPPB policy, indicating little planning has been considered to sustain the continuation of the policy. Likewise, insufficient funding from the

central authority thereby limiting the monitoring of the implementation process may result in the policy to be implemented halfway or worse, its non-continuation (Fullan, 2007). All these issues have resulted to the conclusion that the outcome of policy implementation is contingent on the combination of many variables as discussed in Chapter 7 (see Section 7.2.4). Hence, to encourage teachers to be more receptive to the policy and continue implementing it without much monitoring, the Ministry, should include teachers in all reform phases and treat them like professionals (Olsen and Sexton, 2008) so that authentic and effective innovation can occur, and in a timely manner. Teachers could be provided with an official platform to be involved in policy conversations where they could offer their views on policymaking and implementation. Some teachers, if not all, could be offered to take time off school and attend professional training in policy background and context. In this way, permitting them to have a say in policy and allowing them to bring in their experience in implementation may increase the likelihood for their positive responses towards reform or change.

Furthermore, it is important for both teachers and policymakers to work in partnership to create a balance in their diverse interests and fulfil their distinct needs. Indeed, one possible way of ensuring teachers continued support is to employ a 'soft-landing' method from the beginning. Policy Model B (see Section 3.2.1) could be adopted in this context because it "emphasises the way a variety of interests are taken into consideration at every stage of the policy process; those stages being policy-making, policy-presentation and policy-implementation" (Scott, 2000: 21). For instance, instead of immediately removing CPD funding, the Ministry could establish a shared understanding of what is meant by self-initiated CPD to facilitate the realisation of the new direction in their CPD practice. In effect, this could be undertaken by including teachers from the beginning to the end of the policy formulation process. Moreover, it is crucial to make teachers

understand that the Ministry is gradually moving away from a centralised system and has begun exerting decentralisation of power allowing schools to be in control of making their own decisions. However, for this to occur, school leaders need to initially build trust and reliance on the teachers and encourage buy-in of the intended change before moving on to professional autonomy of teachers and school-based decisions in matters concerning CPD. Eventually, teachers will have a much clearer understanding of why they need to be more independent in their CPD engagement. At the same time, "policy itself is represented as a continuous process of the making and remaking of the original intentions of the policymakers" (ibid).

Another implication for the Ministry could be to recognise Model C (see Section 3.2.1) and to explore the means in which it can help to inform how they go about the process of creating policy and implementing change. Although, adopting this model means taking into account the multi-layered stages of the policy process which requires policymakers and the authorities in combination, to address interrelated variables influencing the outcome of policy at every phase of its implementation. In this way, the policy is continuously evaluated, rewritten and reconfigured throughout the process, occurring in a fragmented and discursive manner (Scott, 2000). The revised model of CPD suggested in this study is an example of how Model C could be considered as an alternative policy process as opposed to the present top-down approach.

In future, the PPPB policy should be emphasising and concentrating on the models of CPD that develop the kind of teacher professionalism envisioned by the Ministry. The findings from this study clearly demonstrate that the Ministry is expecting teachers self-regulate their own CPD, which implies that teachers are given the 'freedom' to decide their own professional learning goals and the kind of activities that support these. However, without clear explanation and justification for the direction of professionalism, teachers continue to

struggle in identifying their own sense of professionalism. In this respect, the Ministry should consider developing specific guidelines for this 'freedom', enabling teachers to align their individual interests and needs with the Ministry's preference for transformative professionalism.

Furthermore, evidence from the policy document shows that the Ministry expects teachers to be active and democratic in their chosen profession. Through interventions in their professional development, teachers are demanded to be continuously learning, continually adapting their instructional practice to suit students' learning needs and to work collaboratively with their colleagues. However, the interviews with teachers revealed that teachers still prefer to be involved in centralised, Ministry-led and school-based CPD. Such approaches have a lingering impact on teacher development. For instance, teachers who were used to centralised and funded in-service training, could not easily give up their privileges. Therefore, in general terms, teacher professional development could not be transformed despite the Ministry's will and intention toward promoting transformative professionalism. Therefore, it is highly recommended that these privileges be reduced in moderation to avoid teachers' resistance towards the policy and promote teacher readiness in gradually embracing innovations in their CPD practice.

8.3 Implications for Policy Implementation

This study has found that teachers are generally critical of the policy and their professional development and attach negative meanings towards it. Further, there is evidence to imply that both policy formulation and implementation processes are problematic. However, this is not meant to indicate that the policy is itself comprehensive while the teachers are simply resistant. Instead, it would be sensible to note that understanding the reasons for teachers'

indifference and resistance against the policy generates insights into finding alternative or better means for its implementation.

This study implies that teachers were not assisted with the necessary support during the implementation process as they appeared to have been left alone to struggle with the challenges and difficulties they encountered in the process. Teachers expressed their frustration with the Ministry who merely 'handed down' the policy to the school leaders and expected them to implement the policy as is. In the centralised Malaysian context, this situation indicates the need for the Ministry to provide a balance between 'informed prescription' at the policy development level and 'informed professionalism' at the school level (Schleicher, 2008). Teachers frequently noted that the Ministry could have provided more information or support about how to plan self-initiated CPD at the school site. Nonetheless, the findings suggest that teachers were generally cognisant of the values of engaging in CPD, even though their heavy workloads demotivated them from doing so. Perhaps, the Ministry could demonstrate to teachers, through the SIP and SISC who are positioned at the DEO, to conduct one-to-one coaching or mentoring to schools on planning self-regulated CPD. It is also imperative for the Ministry to listen to teachers, who have learned and experienced the realities of teaching from their close involvement with students, resources available at school and most importantly, they have better knowledge and experience in matters concerning the local context of implementation.

The study also found that teachers reacted unfavourably to the implementation of the policy due to the lack of common understanding of the policy intention and translation. It is, therefore, crucial for school leaders to initially make sure that teachers agree with and understand the intended outcomes of the policy. Importantly, the entire school should have a shared understanding of what needs to be undertaken and how to achieve it. When teachers are involved in the decision-making process, even if it is only at the school level, "their actions give

meaning, a common purpose, challenge, and motivation to everyone in the school" (Zimmerman, 2006: 242). Furthermore, the development of individuals is insufficient, whereas collaborative cultures are indeed powerful (Fullan, 2001). In other words, professional development only improves the skills and knowledge of individuals, but through the collective endeavour, the sum of individual knowledge and experience are much more significant. In this respect, it is the change in the whole school learning culture along with teacher individual learning that makes the difference (Villegas-Reimers, 2003; Day and Sachs, 2004). Collaboration not only contributes to the collective professional ethos where shared understanding of instructional objectives, approaches, issues and solutions can be developed, but it also promotes an organisational learning culture and support that facilitates individual change efforts (Hawley and Valli, 1999). However, it is apparent from the fieldwork findings in Chapter 6 that the collaborative culture in the schools involved in this study is limited. Teachers infrequently mentioned that their engagement in CPD is collaborative in nature and is often conducted in a standards-based manner with inadequate opportunities for collegiality among teachers. Indeed, most teachers noted time-constraints and conflicting teaching schedules as the reason for their lack of participation in collaborative CPD. Therefore, this indicates the need for school leaders and teachers to negotiate ways and means to allocate sufficient time for collaborative learning, perhaps, by incorporating a fixed timetable for collaborative CPD in teachers' contract hours. Schools that work collectively on improvements tend to engage critically with standards and policies that are prescribed externally; and this also fosters continuous improvement (Zimmerman, 2006).

8.4 Implications for Teachers

CPD, if designed and regulated with appropriate approaches could contribute to improved knowledge and skills amongst teachers. It could be argued that teachers' engagement with effective models of CPD might be a turning point for a change in their professional learning culture, indicating the need for the authorities or CPD providers to carefully deliberate the impacts of the professional development activities. It is recommended that the authorities consider providing support to teachers beyond the delivery of CPD. This means that CPD should not end when a programme ends, but it should be continual by building support networks for teachers to maximise the benefits of CPD. In this way, teachers could pursue other available CPD models and evaluate its relevance and significance to their individual work and practice. Indirectly, teachers' exposure and involvement in communities of practice could extend teachers' natural inclination towards self-initiated CPD as aspired by the system.

This research also implies that for innovations to take place according to the plan, it is strongly argued that a common understanding of the proposed change between the authorities and teachers is necessary. In this regard, teachers could play a more active role in the implementation process by giving their utmost commitment and support to achieve the goals of reform, particularly in the attempt to improve student learning experience. In other words, 'it takes two to tango'. So, to make things work, both parties must equally conceptualise and re-conceptualise their roles to suit the direction of reform.

8.5 Implications for School Leadership

Through the findings from the teacher interviews, this study found that the school leaders' role in policy implementation is "the most difficult of all" (Wedell, 2009: 38). As the middle managers and change leaders, not only are they expected to manage schools, but they also

need to develop a professional learning culture amongst teachers as part of the reform agenda. While at the same time, school leaders are compelled to adapt their own leadership practice to support change. However, the authorities seemed to have overlooked the school leaders role as the mediators of change in this case. Although their roles and responsibilities are outlined in the policy document (see Table 5.2), the policymakers affirmed that there was no specific training provided to school leaders before the implementation of the PPPB policy.

This study implies that the professional development of these school leaders could be included in the implementation strategies so that they could perform their duties correctly and consistently with the goals of the reform. Among others, school leaders could be trained how to determine the forms of CPD that are important and relevant to the expectation of the policy as well as how to go about supporting teachers in changing their professional learning culture. Also, the skills and knowledge on how to build teachers' trust and readiness for change are also crucial in this context to promote teachers' willingness to make changes to their practice.

8.6 Contribution to Academic Debate

The application of the Spectrum of CPD Framework developed by Kennedy (2005; 2014) in this study has been a useful tool in situating the direction of professionalism in the context of the Malaysian teaching workforce. Arguments about the different versions of professionalism as proposed by Sachs (2001; 2003; 2016), Evans (2008; 2011) and others have also been helpful in locating the type of professionalism shaped by the PPPB model of CPD. In fact, the analysis developed insights into how professionalism is constructed and could be developed within Malaysia and tells us theoretically how teacher professionalism is shaped in different aspects. Furthermore, it informs us why it is reasonable and necessary to demand teachers to change the way they engage in CPD activities. The discussion in Chapter 7

delivers the consistent theme that different forms of CPD models contribute to distinct discourses of teacher professionalism. In particular, this study contributes to the theory of CPD-professionalism. The primary aim of this study was to examine the relationship between CPD policy and practice by looking at the construction and implementation of the PPPB policy. So far most studies on CPD-professionalism have focused on the notion that the types or models of CPD teachers engaged with influence their sense of professionalism. For example, if a teacher engages in a collaborative type of CPD such as PLC, he or she is assumed to have embraced collaborative professionalism. In this study I found that this is not the case. The unevenness of change that happens in educational reform contributes to the transition of teacher professionalism being discursive in nature and is influenced by the realities of their work and practice. Individual teachers can adopt discourses associated with different models of professionalism which means that the PPPB model of CPD does not itself assist and support teachers. Simultaneously, the same teacher also draws on different discourses and not recognising that they conflict or have the concern to reconcile them. Therefore, despite the aspiration for transformation of professional learning for all teachers, it is inevitable that some will not be affected by the intended policy. The approach used seemed to be about continuous professional learning but implemented as individualised responsibility rather than as a collegial activity. So, the policy, its implementation and its effect all were uneven.

The new framework introduced in Chapter 7 (see Figure 7.1), represents the relationship between CPD and professionalism and the range of conflicting models that co-exist when a system is in a state of change. The framework suggests that in the context of reform, demanding and requiring teachers to participate in specific forms of CPD may or may not lead them to embrace the prescribed professionalism. The process is not as systematic as the categorisation

of CPD frameworks, and it is not possible to view professionalism as two-dimensional. Teachers may also adopt several versions of professionalism simultaneously, and this circumstance is dependent on the contexts of their work. In this respect, the support and intervention teachers receive is central to the process of shaping their professionalism.

This new framework also highlights the unevenness of change and the contradictory views of CPD-professionalism that it can generate. This framework offers a parameter on how to evaluate components of CPD policies as a means to identify the forms of professionalism teachers adopt and use this information to realign their professionalism into the direction of reform. In some ways, the framework helps in reducing the gap between policy intention and translation as it could be used to detect the contradictions between the intentions and outcomes of policy. By evaluating the characteristics of CPD models offered to teachers, it is also possible to determine the underpinning professionalism adopted by the overall CPD system. To illustrate, in the case of Malaysia, the present professional development practice is still at the malleable stage, where the majority of the CPD activities are externally imposed and measured against externally prescribed standards resulting in teachers wedged in between controlled-compliant and collaborative-activist professionalism. This is because, as suggested in Chapter 5, the PPPB model of CPD focuses on developing attributes of teacher leadership (see Section 5.2.5). Although, the CPD that teachers engaged with did not seem to be tailored to this direction. Likewise, despite knowing that they should be engaging more in collaborative models of CPD, teachers continued to be involved in prescribed forms of CPD due to inadequate support.

Thus, using the new framework to identify components of CPD-professionalism, the misalignment and unevenness of change in teachers' CPD and professionalism could be realigned to match the

original intention of the reform. This model is useful for teachers to identify the forms of CPD suitable for their individual needs and the professionalism that defined them as a teacher because engagement with appropriate forms of CPD has the potential to impact on their attitudes and beliefs. Similarly, this model could assist school leaders to manage and regulate continuous, collaborative and more focused forms of professional learning based on the needs of a specific group of teachers in their schools. Policymakers, on the other hand, could use the revised model as a guideline to examine and evaluate components of CPD policies that appear incompatible with the governments' direction.

8.7 Limitations of the Study

Overall, the present research is valuable in demonstrating the interactions between CPD reform policy and its implementation along with teachers' experiences in engaging with CPD, and the influences that shape their professionalism. However, there are some limitations of this study and these are next explained in the following subsections.

Generalisability

The study only involved teachers from three secondary schools from one district. Although the small number of schools reduces the possibility to generalise the findings to the larger teaching population, these schools represent teachers working in the sub-urban area. The context of this study is focused on female teachers working in public secondary schools that are close to the centre that is driving change. I expect teachers to be less connected to the centre in other contexts and hence, unlikely to have a fuller understanding of the policy than the teachers in this study. Additionally, it would be interesting to see how teachers in different contexts view the same policy and whether they share similar challenges in its implementation. Nevertheless, to

overcome this limitation, care should be taken before extending the findings to other contexts.

The scope of the study

The study only focuses on examining the views of the policymakers on the formulation of the policy and the secondary school teachers' perceptions about their experiences in implementing the policy. The study did not include the school leaders and CPD coordinators who have the authority in regulating CPD at the school level, which means that I did not explore all the mechanisms through which the policy was being implemented. Therefore, this highlights the opportunity for further research that focuses on the processes of implementation.

The data collection method

The methods for data collection were limited to my experiential knowledge, interviews and document analysis. Although the literature highlights a disparity between what teachers say about their practice and their observed practice, I did not have the opportunity to observe school-based CPD. This means that the data collected were only based on the comments and experiences reported by the participants. A combination of both qualitative and quantitative methods may help in generating additional perspectives, particularly in the holistic understandings of the research area.

8.8 Priorities for Future Research

Based on the overall findings, this study has contributed to gathering new insights regarding the PPPB policy from the perspectives of the people who have been closely involved with the development and implementation of the policy. The findings offer valuable insights and present a useful basis for future research, policy development and analysis as well as for teachers' practice. The outcomes of educational

reform, particularly on teacher professionalism, is better informed through this study and likewise, the priorities suggested for further investigation build upon the emergent findings. In the long term, it is critical for the Malaysian education system to adopt alternative approaches towards policy formulation and implementation to lessen the gap between the divergence in the intention and the translation of policy. At the same time, the system needs to encourage informed and democratic professionalism amongst teachers. The following are suggestions for further research.

First, the findings from this study clearly demonstrate that there is a need to change the culture of learning among teachers particularly, and the education community in general. Most of the teachers in Malaysia are more likely to continue as passive recipients of knowledge if their professional development engagement remains sporadic and instead, managed by external experts. Accordingly, it is necessary for future research to consider exploring new ways or mechanisms that could be employed to encourage and nurture a transformative learning culture in schools and the Ministry.

Secondly, it would be valuable for future research to identify which forms of CPD are appropriate to shape teachers' professionalism in the direction that would be most beneficial to them. As mentioned in Chapter 7, although there is a variety of CPD that teachers could choose from, the deficit models of CPD are still popular in schools. Further research will help to justify why some models are no longer sufficient or relevant to the changing nature of teachers' work. A qualitative research focusing specifically on teachers’ experiences and engagement with specific models of CPD could provide greater insights into the impacts of the models on teacher professional learning. The identification of suitable forms of CPD would not only strengthen teachers’ knowledge and skills but also assist the Ministry in designing the proper support for teachers.

Thirdly, a possible area of research could be to undertake a longitudinal study of teachers' day-to-day CPD practice. Such exploration has the potential to provide tangible data and illustrations which reflects the contextual realities of teachers' work. A more focused investigation of the individual conduct and practice of teachers may also offer more depth in understanding how their sense of professionalism develops over time. Simultaneously, the findings will offer policymakers ideas and suggestions on how to align policy intention with the realities of teachers' work and may help to limit the act of resistance from teachers.

Fourthly, as it is widely acknowledged that the purpose for professional development within education reform is to promote better teaching and learning outcomes for both teachers and students, it is suggested that future research consider observing how CPD impacts the teaching and learning aspects inside the classroom. A possible way to do this is to conduct experimental research on teachers' engagement in a certain CPD activity and evaluate its impact on student learning. Such investigation would provide further insights into the association between teacher CPD and its influence on student learning. However, as noted in the literature, due to their complex interactions, the attempt to link teacher CPD, classroom practice and student learning is an arduous task.

Finally, in the future, research could be directed towards exploring and developing mechanisms through which teachers participation in the policy process could be expanded in Malaysia. The literature has widely acknowledged the potential benefits of including the teachers' voice in the policymaking process as they could provide genuine insights on what actually happens at the ground level and offer positive suggestions for change to occur.

8.9 Conclusion: My Personal Insights

I began this study with the intention to examine and make sense of how educational policy related to CPD is implemented and viewed from the teachers' perspectives. The process of conducting this study has been a meaningful and insightful learning experience, a combination of joy and frustration as well as a self-discovery journey for myself. Over the period, I spent time reviewing a vast quantity of literature, gathering a considerable amount of data and analysing it; I came across an overwhelming volume of information that requires never-ending reading, writing and interpretation. The more I engaged with the data, the more my predisposed thoughts were challenged, resulting in myself engaging in more literature and being exposed to new ways of thinking.

I have learned so much from doing this research. Most importantly, I learned the culture of academe, especially the process of conducting social science research in more depth. Research is not only about collecting data and making sense of it; it requires reading and writing skills as well as having the skills to make analytical and critical judgments of the issues at hand, which I initially found quite difficult to do. What I did to overcome this issue, was by participating and presenting my research at conferences. Through the process of preparing papers and materials for the conferences, I was able to narrow the focus of my research findings within the boundaries set by the organisers. In this way, I was able to distance myself from the overwhelming research data and only construct arguments that fit the conference themes. Indirectly, this learning process has allowed me to restructure and organise my thesis in a more precise and systematic way.

Also, this doctoral journey at times involved considerable emotional turmoil which necessitated me to take a step back from the thesis as a way to manage stress, pressure and frustration. There were moments when I felt like giving up because I was confused and

uncertain about the direction of my research. My ideas were entangled, and my discussions were circular. Sharing such feelings with peers and supervisors helped in managing my sanity. Nevertheless, despite the challenges, I had some great and enjoyable times too especially when the light-bulb moments happened, targets and deadlines were met, and missions accomplished allowing me to move on to the next stage. All these experiences one way or another have immensely contributed to my professional and personal growth.

Practically, this study has given me the opportunity to distance myself from my duty as a ministry official and policymaker for a while so that I could view the chosen area of study from the eyes and lens of a scientific researcher. This, however, was quite challenging for me. Being a civil servant, I pledged to advocate the Government's agendas and to argue against these, placed myself in an uncomfortable and awkward position. Criticising the strategies planned by the Ministry and pointing out what is lacking from their proposal led me to spend too much time looking for suitable words and phrases to be used in the dissertation. I was equally worried that I would make statements that might tarnish the image of my country. Over time, as I reviewed more literature, I learned how scholars write their arguments, and I gained the confidence to criticise intellectually.

I hoped that by undertaking, and through this research, not only would the Ministry acknowledge the need to take the reality of teachers' work into account when developing policies, but also teachers themselves would recognise the value and importance of continuing their professional development throughout their careers. In particular, I was keen to find out whether the PPPB policy has indeed had any impact on their identity and status as professionals through the changing expectations of teachers' experiences with CPD and if these findings could contribute to the argument that the forms of professional development shape teacher professionalism. Notably, this means that the process of change does not only involve changing the types of CPD

model teachers subscribe to but more on changing their culture of learning. With anticipation, inevitably over time, Malaysian teachers will eventually change the way they engage in professional learning.

Lastly, this research process has allowed me to reflect and understand my own professionalism, enabling me to construct myself as a researcher and make sense of a new way of thinking through the interactions with other doctoral students, supervisors and the research process itself.

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APPENDIX 1: Pilot Study

**"Shifting the Paradigm:
An Exploration of Malaysian Teachers' Perspective towards Professional Development and the New CPD Master Plan"**

"Transformation of the mind and soul drive a transformation..."

Tan Sri Dato ' Hj Muhyiddin bin Hj Mohd Yassin (2014)
Minister of Education, Malaysia

1.0 Introduction

Working with the Ministry of Education (MoE), Malaysia gave me vast opportunities to closely observe teacher training activities. I noticed some teachers attend training to improve their pedagogical skills while others attend training because they were forced to do so. Perhaps, something needs to be done to encourage more teachers to attend training at their own will. The new Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013 – 2025, requires teachers to learn new roles and ways of teaching that translate into long-term developmental processes which require them to focus on changing their own practices and mindset towards Continuing Professional Development (CPD) (MoE, 2013). To do this, new approaches to CPD should be introduced and make teachers realize the importance of lifelong learning. One of the initiatives outlined by MoE is the introduction of *Pelan Pembangunan Profesionalisme Berterusan - Guru dan Pemimpin Sekolah (PPPB)* also known as CPD Master Plan which was recently launched (MoE, 2014). PPPB aimed at transforming practices for improving teacher quality and empowering school leaders.

This paper is divided into three parts: data collection, data analysis and reflection on the process. In the first part, I discuss the rationale for the methodology and method used to gather data including the interview design and process. Since the purpose of this study is to explore teachers' perception towards professional development and PPPB, I have decided to conduct online focus group (FG) interview as a method of data collection. The data is then

analyzed using thematic analysis (TA). Next, I describe how the data, which has been coded and categorized into sub-themes, are analyzed. Here, further discussion of TA is explained to answer the research questions. In the final part, I reflect upon the outcomes of the study by giving close references to the strengths and weaknesses of the online semi-structured FG interview and TA as a categorizing strategy for qualitative data. The discussion on ethics, reflexivity and my role and position in the research are summarized towards the conclusion.

2.0 Data Collection

2.1 Methodology and methods

This research is based upon the interpretivist paradigm which concentrates on understanding and interpretation. Neuman (2000) claims interpretivist research aims to comprehend the meanings in human actions rather than to generalize and predict causes and effects. The main goal of interpretivism is to understand individual experiences, with the belief that reality is subjective and constructed by the individual (Lather, 2006). As the focus is always on the experience of the participants, often, interpretivists are interested in the subjective meanings participants' invest in human interactions and interpret what is perceived as reality (Schwandt, 1994). Given that, the methods are not as systematized as in positivist research. Interpretivist studies, in contrast, adopt a more personal and flexible research as compared to rigid structural frameworks (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). While researchers may have preconceived knowledge of the field, still, they do not claim to know enough to pre-specify a set design (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). That is why the design should be more open and flexible so it can be responsive to events and insights that occur along the way. Hence, the relationship between the researcher and participants is interdependent and mutually interactive in negotiating the research outcomes. The researcher remains open to

new knowledge throughout the research and meaning is cooperatively developed with the help of participants. Although I was involved in the writing of PPPB, I do not know what the teachers think of the content and how far it will be helpful in changing teachers' perception towards CPD. Thus, a flexible methodology would give me the opportunity to look at PPPB from the teachers' perspectives.

As "the philosophical stance informing the methodology" (Crotty (1993:3), I decide to conduct qualitative research which complements interpretivism; as it allows for the exploration of richness, depth, and complexity of trends or events (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The method used in this study is FG interviews. According to Ho (2006: 5.2), "the hallmark of FG interviews is the explicit use of group interaction as data to explore insights that would otherwise remain hidden". Rabiee (2004) cited Thomas et al. (1995) stated that the social interaction of the group is often deeper and richer than those obtained from one-to-one interviews.

Due to time zone and location constraints, I opt to conduct online FG interview via WhatsApp application. Before I explain further on the features of WhatsApp, it is noteworthy to discuss some aspects of online interviews. The two types of online interviews, namely grouping interviews and one-to-one interviews could be conducted by both synchronous (real time) and asynchronous (non-real time) grounds. Hooley et al. (2012) claim that emails, bulletin boards and discussion groups are the most frequently used methods for asynchronous online interviewing. Alternatively, Stewart and Williams (2005) suggest that synchronous approaches emphasis on text-based chatrooms, Instant Messenger (IM) protocols and video-conferencing. Based on their suggestion, using WhatsApp is considered as a synchronous approach to online interviewing. Hinchcliffe and Gavin (2009) found:

> "For both respondent and researcher, the substantial gains of online interviewing using IM outweighed the losses" because the "mutual confirmation of meaning and understanding through textual communication encouraged more accurate data, compared to reliance on confirmation through visual cues in face-to-face communication" (p. 333).

Therefore, by taking chances, I am exploring this possibility with my study.

Next, "Every popular and widespread communication tool can (indeed must!) become a qualitative research tool – beginning with WhatsApp" (Social-qualitative.com, n.d.). So, what and why use WhatsApp? WhatsApp is one of the many IM services accessible on smartphones. This application has somehow replaced Short Text Messages (SMS) and communication through mobile phones has become easier, faster and free. Individuals can chat with friends and family overseas via WhatsApp without having incurred global SMS charges (Yeboah & Ewur, 2014).

WhatsApp is well known and widely used with more than 400 million users worldwide (Forbes, n.d.). And, "WhatsApp was third in Indonesia, second in Malaysia..." (The Star Online, 21 February 2014). This statement indicates majority of Malaysians have WhatsApp on their smartphones and it was not surprising the participants of my FG, have been constantly using WhatsApp. It is essential to provide the medium for the FG that is accessible, familiar, convenient, and natural, in everyday use by the participants so that they are able to express themselves comfortably. Additionally, it is the online equivalent of going to meet them in the staff rooms during break time. Moreover, WhatsApp is an interactive medium which presents threaded chats on a wall and allow users to send messages to another person or a group of people. WhatsApp messages are time-stamped and include notifications to show whether the message has been sent and seen respectively. Also, WhatsApp presents the use of "spatial position and colour to differentiate sender and receiver messages" (O'Hara et.al, 2014: 3). Yeboah & Ewur (2014) cited Kaplan (2010),

social media like WhatsApp creates the opportunity for people to "share and/or exchange information and ideas in virtual communities and network". With such opportunities, I assume FG interviews can be conducted at any time and participants can respond immediately or at a later time convenient to them.

2.2 WhatsApp focus group interview design and process

An obvious challenge in designing a WhatsApp FG interview is the limited literature on WhatsApp as a tool for qualitative data collection. However, the growing number of researches related to online interviewing and FG interview in a way mounted the information to make this a tangible approach for data collection. Initially, I was contemplating between using the more structured and less structured interview in the FG discussion. A structured interview with a narrow set of questions may well produce equivalently limited data although the participants speak of the research topic. In contrast, a less structured interview may make the data more difficult to analyze than the well-ordered discussions because participants have more opportunity to pursue what interests them (Morgan, 1997). As noted before, interpetivism allows for flexible methods, and in this research, the "funnel" interview strategy can compromise both the structured and less structured interviews. The funnel-based interview begins with a less structured style that emphasizes open discussion and then moves toward a more structured discussion of specific questions (ibid). Since the funnel analogy matches an interview with a general opening and a narrower, more tightly controlled ending, I instigated discussion by posting questions about their teaching and CPD experiences (Appendix 1). The participants sent messages on the group's wall immediately as they are able to relate to their own experience (Appendix 2). This affirms what Morgan (1997) noted on the compromise that makes it

possible to hear the participants' own perspectives in the early part of each discussion as well as their responses to the researcher's specific interests in the later part of the discussion.

Turner (2010) cited McNamara (2009) suggests several recommendations for creating effective research questions for interviews and one of it is to ask open-ended questions. Such questions give participants the freedom to elaborate their views and give discussions a "kick start" before moving to intended questions. Similarly, Creswell (2007) recommends researcher being flexible with research questions being formed. He makes the assertion that interviewee will not necessarily answer the question being asked by the researcher and, in fact, may answer a question that is asked in another question later in the interview. This is evident in this study when I asked the participants about their first impression of PPPB, they gave the answer towards the end of the discussion after being asked other questions (Appendix 4(a): pp. 5 – 12).

I created two chatrooms called "Mind Shaper" (Group 1) and "CPD for Teachers" (Group 2) on WhatsApp. Two groups are appropriate for this small-scale study because the purpose is not to claim generalizability across groups and; it is an uncommon goal of FG interviews. Since participants for FG rarely randomly chosen, it is impossible to make assumptions from the data to a bigger group due to the bias of sample selection (Vaughn et al., 1996). Thus, input from both groups is utilized to enrich findings.

Typically, FG interview involves a group of five to ten participants sharing their opinions about a topic in a non-threatening and comfortable environment (Ho, 2006). The key element for deeper and richer interaction is the "participants are selected because they are a purposive, although not necessarily representative, sampling of a specific population, this group being 'focused' on a given topic'" (Rabiee, 2004). Bearing this in mind, I carefully

selected the participants so that they can give thorough reflections of PPPB. Firstly, I sent emails to 20 teachers requesting consent and 16 of them agreed to participate in the study. This is a practical plan to cover for no-shows. The participants consist of Malaysian secondary school teachers who have teaching experience between 3 to 30 years. They were divided into a group of eight people because below six, it may be difficult to sustain a discussion; above ten, it may be difficult to control one (Morgan, 1997). They were given a week to read and review PPPB. I believe the time is sufficient because PPPB consists of only 70 pages and they were on school holiday till January 2015. However, most of the participants stated they only browse through the book and refer to it during discussion. A quotation to illustrate this is "Sorry, not clear…I just browsed through the CPD book" (Appendix 9: p. 5). Two participants, Ali and Mahani gave feedback that show they have done in-depth reading of PPPB. Both of their comments contain examples from the book (Appendix 8: pp. 5 – 6; Appendix 9: pp. 8 – 12)

Ordinary face-to-face FG interviews usually takes up one to two hours. Via WhatsApp, it went on for several days. Group 1's discussion started on 15/12/2014 and ended on 19/12/2014 equivalent of 15 hours and 37 minutes while; Group 2's session was from 16/12/2014 to 21/12/2014 equivalent of 37 hours and 04 minutes (Appendix 11). Participants were engaged with discussions for few minutes at a time. A short text reply would take only two to three seconds while longer comments take approximately three to five minutes. Although the length of hours greatly differs between the two groups, I believe the quality of discussion is quite comparable as they gave almost similar accounts when asked the same questions.

The messages were posted on the chatroom wall and participants gave feedback at times convenient to them. To illustrate, when I posted the first question, some participants

took time to reply as they stated on the wall as "busy" and "I am outside" (Appendix 8: pp. 1 -2). Not all participants were involved in the discussion on day one. Some replied the next day. One participant from Group 1 and, three participants from Group 2 did not participate at all in the discussion. Even so, both sessions went on quite well as most participants contributed their views on what they understand about CPD. I inserted some follow-up questions to keep the discussion going (Appendix 8: pp 2 – 3). The groups were closed when participants had no more comments to make, for example, in Group 1; since there was no more conversation on 18/12/2014 the group was closed on 19/12/2014. In summary, the discussion went on for four and five consecutive days and the participants were committed to answer questions when the time is convenient. Participants also have more time to think before giving comments and being able to express in text rather than verbally might also contributed to richer responses.

3.0 Data Analysis

3.1 Thematic analysis

Thematic analysis (TA) is "A method for identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns within data" (Braun and Clarke's (2006): p. 79). As a novice researcher, I find TA is simple to use as it allows for flexibility in my choice of theoretical framework and it can be used with any theory I prefer. This flexibility allows for rich, detailed and complex description of data collected from the WhatsApp interview.

The first step is familiarizing yourself with your data and a transcription is required if verbal data is present (ibid). Luckily, discussions using WhatsApp can be emailed and read using Google Docs. This has definitely saved me plenty of time. I read the discussions countless times to identify themes and patterns. Through the reading process, I found

repeated words, phrases and expressions that later became apparent patterns (ibid). From here, I started generating initial codes using word-processor coloured highlighters. Since this is an important phase, I tried to code for as many potential codes and themes as possible. This is done by fragmenting the chat messages into several profiles (Appendix 4(a) and 4(b)). After the coding process, the data that is identified by the same codes are collated together into themes and sub-themes using TA table (Appendix 5). Based on the TA table, it is obvious the interview questions shaped the themes. Although the interview questions are open-ended, they are very structured in terms of the wording of the questions. The participants were asked identical questions, but the questions were formulated so that the responses are open-ended. The participants answer the interview questions accordingly and the open-endedness of the questions has allowed me to probe questions as means of follow-up and guide the participants towards my research focus.

The next step is refinement of the themes. I re-read the data many times to ensure the data extracts fit into each theme. This is crucial in ensuring all data forms a coherent pattern. Likewise, in doing TA, induction creates themes and deduction verifies them. "The 'keyness' of a theme is not necessarily dependent on quantifiable measures – but rather on whether it captures something important in relation to the overall research question" (ibid: p. 82). Again, using thematic maps, I try to visualize the relationships between the themes and whether they reflect the meaning of the data as a whole before creating an overall narrative (Appendix 6(a) and 6(b)). Having done that, I constructed concise name of each theme to give the readers a sense of what the theme is about. Also, I translated the Malay words in the thematic maps into English. At this stage, I selected four themes related to common discourse on CPD and PPPB (Appendix 6 (c)).

Theme 1: Reasons for attending CPD

Based on the discussions, the participants seem to have typical reasons for attending CPD. They know it is important for them to attend CPD to improve their professional skills. Apart from that, they do it for self-satisfaction and getting a reward at the end of it – increase of salary, grade and rank. This is shown in these quotes:

> *"CPD means professional development because I want to improve my teaching skills" (Norkiah)*

> *"It is worth going if translated into career advancement or increased salary…if not, I don't want to go" (Norina)*

Theme 2: Unwillingness to attend CPD

The Malaysian education system is highly centralized not only in the curriculum but also in teacher training. Most training is carried out via cascade model, a mechanism delivering training messages conducted from trainers at the central level to trainees at the local level through several layers (Suzuki, 2008; Hayes, 2000). The extensive use of this model in many developing countries is because it reaches a great many participants in a short period of time and being cost-effective (Leu (2004) cited in Dichaba & Mokhele, 2012). Unfortunately, the practice of "one-size-fits-all" approach may have contributed to the six common reasons why teachers are unwilling to attend CPD (Appendix 8).

> *"Our current system is cascade system. Top down. First person attended the course for a month, the second person attended for two weeks and the third person attended for an hour. And what do you expect from that? What's' more, the first person is not a classroom teacher" (Norkiah)*

In terms of the reason "unsuitable CPD", two participants quote:

> *"Most of the CPD does not really fit teachers' interest" (Syakima)*

> *"Input should be catered to meet what we want and need and not dictated upon us" (Norina)*

Theme 3: Perceptions towards the content of PPPB

With regard to word choices, both groups gave more positive perceptions towards the content of PPPB as compared to the negative impressions (Appendix 7). In relation to the themes, three sub-themes arose from the positive perceptions and three sub-themes emerge from the negative impressions (Appendix 6(c)). The quotations concerning these sub-themes are given in Appendix 9. It is not surprising that the participants find PPPB somehow useful for their CPD planning, but, concurrently feel what is expected of them is not easy to achieve. Considering that, the negative perceptions towards the content of PPPB are in a way related to their unwillingness to attend CPD. For instance, an introduction to a new policy or guideline may make teachers feel more work is added to their current workload which contribute to their unwillingness to attend CPD. Besides, the negative teachers' attitude towards the content of PPPB is perhaps due to their previous CPD experience where they were forced to join and not given the opportunity to attend preferred CPD. Similarly, they still feel unconvinced with the implementation of PPPB because of the improper planning of previous CPD activities.

Theme 4: Relevant parts of PPPB as solutions for better CPD experience

Alternatively, PPPB may offer solutions to the participants' present CPD experience. This theme surfaces when both groups listed several sections of PPPB that they find most relevant to teachers. Three aspects highlighted by the participants are Training Need Analysis (TNA), the implementation of PPPB and self-initiated activities. The participants stated that TNA would benefit them in terms of planning their own CPD needs. Also, TNA enables them to identify CPD of their preference that would suit their interests. Moreover, PPPB serves as guidelines for teachers and administrators as it provides detailed step-by-

step instructions on how to conduct effective CPD through the *Pembangunan Profesionalisme Berterusan Kit* also known as "CPD Kit" (MOE, 2014: pp. 40 – 56). Possibly, this may help ease the implementation of PPPB. As for self-initiated activities, the participants express their relief and welcome the suggestion as part of their CPD experience. Someway, self-initiated CPD may reduce the number of teachers who are reluctant to attend training as it provides opportunities for teachers to take responsibility for their own CPD. Therefore, PPPB may be the focal point for changing teachers' mindset towards CPD as aspired by MOE.

4.0 Reflection on the Process

4.1 Strengths and weaknesses of WhatsApp semi-structured focus group interview and thematic analysis

The idea to use WhatsApp as the tool for data collection came to mind when I was thinking about who my participants would be. I am staying in Bristol over the holidays and it is too costly to conduct a face-to-face interview in Malaysia. Skype and email interview were in the list too but after going through the literature reviews, I discarded them. By using WhatsApp, there is no transcription time because conversations can be downloaded into the computer. WhatsApp also allows the participants to be involved in the interview at times convenient to them. Since there is no limitation on the number of words sent via WhatsApp, I see this as an advantage although the interface resembles that of SMS. In a way, WhatsApp does encourage elaborated, detailed answer (Appendix 4(a): pp. 6 – 7). However, Markham (2004) cited by Opdenakker (2006) stated that this type of interview may be more appropriate for people who type fast, and whose personalities come through in the text as clearly as they would in face-to-face interaction.

Next, the time-stamped feature allows me to track time and identify who has not contributed much to the discussion. The follow-up interview questions help enhanced the discussions as it allows for flexibility and the standardized questions have helped me in maintaining the purpose of discussion. Nevertheless, I find it challenging to monitor the discussion due to the time zone difference. At times, I was unable to give live questions and feedback, but, I am lucky to have committed participants who went on with the discussion though they know I was asleep. The participants gave feedback by giving specific reference to their own CPD experience conducted by MOE as well as school-based trainings. The participants even posted questions and seek approval from each other (Appendix 4(b): pp. 3 – 5).

Due to the flexible nature of TA, what I do with the themes actually differs from the initial intention of the research. I ended up looking at teachers' perception towards professional development and PPPB instead of PPPB alone. As I examine the data and develop some deeper appreciation of the content, I became interested in searching for broader patterns in the study. Boyatzis (1998) discloses that "researchers interested in looking for broader patterns in their work in order to then conduct a more fine grained analysis often use thematic analysis as a first step". This is a window for me to have a sneak peak of the topic and I may consider feeding the information gathered here into my dissertation. On the contrary, TA is quite challenging when it comes to making explicit justifications of the research process. This is because "a good balance between analytic narrative and illustrative extracts" is one of the criteria for good TA (Braun and Clarke, 2006: 96). This, however, would require skills and training. Although I need not transcribe the interviews, I spent most of my time moving back and forth of the interviews' content to ensure I have extracted evident and sound analysis of the themes.

4.2 Self-reflection and the role as the researcher and moderator

I acted as the moderator in the discussions. I only initiate the questions without offering my viewpoints on the topic during the talk-in-process session. By minimizing the moderator's involvement in the discussion, the participants would have more opportunity to elaborate on the topic (Morgan, 1997). However, most of the participants gave direct responses and I use the follow-up questions to keep the discussion going. And, there were times when participants ask for clarification for the questions posted. An example of this is when I ask their view on professional development for teachers; a participant requested clarification whether she should be talking about her current or previous CPD experience as she has been a teacher for almost 30 years (Appendix 4(b): p. 2). Kvale (2008) categorizes this as "Knowledge as Produced" whereby "...knowledge is not merely found, mined, or given, but actively created through questions and answers, and the product co-authored by interviewer and interviewee" (p. 54).

4.3 Reflexivity and ethics

Reflexivity is the process of scrutinizing both oneself as researcher, and the research process (Malterud, 2001). This process is fundamental in ensuring trustworthiness, transparency and accountability of the research inquiry. To do this, I did a reflection of myself as the moderator and researcher in the previous section. In terms of validity, I provided both the semi-structured and follow-up questions, a rich account of the interviews, coding tables and TA. I even went through a recursive process during the data analysis to confirm the findings. Throughout the data analysis process, my existing knowledge of the study influences how I define the themes and how I categorize them into sub-themes. In other words, my assumptions and views may have impacted on the research

process and outcomes in order to interpret the multiple realities presented by the participants. Also, I mention about my background in the introduction of this study to give the readers an overview of the purpose and rationale of doing research related to teachers' CPD. As Malterud (2001) stated in his view of reflexivity:

> "A researcher's background and position will affect what they choose to investigate, the angle of investigation, the methods judged most adequate for this purpose, the findings considered most appropriate, and the framing and communication of conclusions" (p. 483-484).

And, through reflexivity, I am able to recognize areas to focus upon and what can be improved in future research. One thing I should have done is 'member checking' the coding of themes with the participants to confirm that I am on the right track. Alternatively, during discussions, I did ask the participants for clarification to confirm my understanding of their responses (Appendix 4(a): pp. 2 -3).

Finally, research ethics is an integral part of research and it influences people in various ways. That is why it is fundamental to provide anonymity and confidentiality to research respondent (Walford, 2005). Although the participants are my former colleagues, I do not have their contact numbers. Thus, I contacted them via Facebook Messenger and requested for their consent (Appendix 10). Those agreeing to participate would reply my message by giving their contact details. To protect their identities, I use pseudonyms throughout the research. The reason for the self-selection method is because the participants are not intended to be representative of any larger population and does not even claim to remove self-selection bias. In addition, this method allows a frame to self-define and thus provide context and depth, as well as to remove researcher selection bias (Berg, 1998).

5.0 Conclusion

This assignment has been a reality check as I find it challenging doing qualitative research specifically when using FG interview. The interview question needs to be carefully crafted so that it molds the answer to the research question nicely. Also, as moderator, I need to constantly monitor the chatroom to keep the discussion going. Reading about and doing TA is definitely two different things. It sounds easy when you read the step-by-step way of doing it. Little did I know how much time consuming it is. Still, I may consider using this method for data analysis due to its flexibility to link the numerous participants' perceptions and thoughts and compare them with the data collected in different situation at different times from other or the same participants in a research study. On that account, the potential for interpretation becomes unlimited. Overall, this has been a good learning experience and has given me deeper understanding of qualitative research.

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APPENDIX 2: An Excerpt from the WhatsApp chats

18 Dec 2014 04:50 - Normahani Yunos: was sent to a primary sch..in one of the felda areas in NS. as an Eng tchr..

18 Dec 2014 04:55 - Normahani Yunos: i cant figure out any other ways of leaving this felda sch..so my first move was going on KDC..stands for Kursus Dlm Cuti...remedial course..thinking of means /ways to help the weak/slow learners in my class.

18 Dec 2014 04:59 - Normahani Yunos: so had that done during the sch hols..for 1 year..& was given a chance to set one remedial room.. a small one. ..but i still feel incomplete or mybe unsatisfied with their achievements..

18 Dec 2014 05:00 - Normahani Yunos: later decided on taking a one year course...in IPSI masa tu..

18 Dec 2014 05:05 - Normahani Yunos: meanwhile i apply for a transfer...before my one yr course ended ....i manage to get a tranfer..to Sentul ..oso a pri.sch.

18 Dec 2014 05:07 - Normahani Yunos: wussh.. ..to cut the story short...i did my degree after i got married with 2 childrn..

18 Dec 2014 05:16 - Normahani Yunos: as for me , i would consider.. career devpmt as well as self satisfaction..work together...

18 Dec 2014 05:17 - Finn: 👐👐👐

18 Dec 2014 05:18 - Normahani Yunos: there is no way that u go on yet career dev. without self satisfaction.....hihihi fin..

18 Dec 2014 05:18 - Normahani Yunos: yer...

18 Dec 2014 05:25 - Normahani Yunos: next will be on the emailed cpd content...to be continued..hehe..

18 Dec 2014 05:59 - Anom Abdullah: Kak.... U inspire me💓

18 Dec 2014 06:00 - Finn: Salute you kak normahani

18 Dec 2014 06:02 - Anom Abdullah: 💓💓

18 Dec 2014 06:21 - Normahani Yunos: tq dear anom & fin..

18 Dec 2014 06:24 - Normahani Yunos: i think my involvement with the ppd as a KBSR KeyPersonnel and the TST had contributed a lot in my career development too.

18 Dec 2014 06:26 - Normahani Yunos: KP...is now known as JU..& TST has been rebranded as the ...

18 Dec 2014 06:28 - Normahani Yunos: .lupa pulak.....yg led by Dr manjeet ke....placed in ppd tu..

18 Dec 2014 06:31 - Normahani Yunos: the TST group was initiated by Dr Chua Keng Boon..if im not mistaken.

APPENDIX 3: Interview Guide for Focus Group

1. Have you read or been given explanation on the PPPB document?
2. If yes, where did you get the access to the document?
3. Who explained the content of the document to you?
4. If no, have you heard about the PPPB at all?
5. From whom/where did you know about it?
6. What is your understanding of the PPPB document?
7. What is your view on the PPPB document?
8. Have you been given similar document prior to the PPPB?
9. If yes, what is the name of the document?
10. What is your view of that document?
11. If no, does this mean this is the first time you have a formal document regarding the CPD?
12. What is your view on teachers' CPD in Malaysia?
13. What kind of CPD courses/activities have you attended?
14. Why do you choose to participate in this course?
15. How do you know about the CPD available?
16. What do you think of the procedures of planning teachers own CPD given in the PPPB document?
17. Do you attend CPD at your own will?
18. Why do you need to do so?
19. How easy was the training to access?

Were there any practical difficulties to overcome? (Time, funding, etc.)

20. How do you think training should be delivered?
21. What kind of training would best support you as a practitioner?
22. What is your opinion on the list of skills expected to be possessed by teachers at a particular level of his/her career?
23. Do you think this policy is relevant to you?

APPENDIX 4: Interview Guide for Individual Teachers

1. Why did you choose to become a teacher?
2. Can you describe any professional development you have taken part in, since becoming a qualified teacher?
3. Can you describe your experience in engaging with CPD before the implementation of the PPPB policy?
4. In your opinion, how well is CPD organised in this school?
5. How actively involved are you in planning and securing CPD for yourself?
6. Do you know how to do this before you read the PPPB document?
7. What are the main sources of support and main barriers to your own professional development? Why are these barriers?
8. What are your views of CPD in this school?
9. How enthusiastic are you about your own professional development?
10. Are you aware of your professional development entitlement? What are they?
11. In your view, how does the PPPB influence your choice of CPD engagement?
12. What have you learned from doing CPD?
13. Have you been able to put into practice what you have learned at your school?
14. Do you share your new knowledge with your colleagues?
15. What are your main reasons for undertaking CPD?
16. Do you know that you need to possess certain skills at a particular level of your career? If yes, how do you know this?
17. In your view, in what ways is the PPPB policy beneficial to you?
18. Do you think the PPPB policy is relevant to your practice?
19. Has the implementation of the PPPB policy change the way you view CPD?

20. Does the PPPB assist you in gauging your professional development needs?
21. Do you record your involvement in CPD? How do you do this? What is your opinion on this?
22. What kind of CPD opportunities is available at your school?
23. What kind of CPD is valuable to you?
24. Is there a particular form of CPD that you prefer and why?

APPENDIX 5: List of Questions for Document Analysis

1. Who authored this document? When? Where?
2. What perceived need did it address?
3. Is the writing style authoritative/ discursive/ generic/ directed/ prescriptive etc.?
4. What is the stated purpose of the document?
5. Does it have another implicit purpose?
6. Who is the intended reader/user/audience?
7. How is it intended to be used? For how long?
8. How readily available is it? Who is able to easily access it?
9. What information do you need in order to access it?
10. Who knows that this document exists?
11. How does it relate to the other documents you are analyzing?
12. What other texts does it reference and how are they referenced (e.g. are they treated as authoritative?)?
13. What notions of 'good teacher', 'professional', 'good teaching' are implicit within the document?
14. How is CPD understood/constructed within the text?
15. How is educational change, reform constructed within the text?
16. What rationale does it offer for change/reform?
17. What is there in the text that you did not expect? What surprises are there?

APPENDIX 6: List of Questions for Analysis of CPD Portfolio

1. Who prepared the portfolio?
2. What is the purpose of the portfolio?
3. What are included in the portfolio?
4. How long did it take to complete the portfolio?
5. When will the portfolio be used?
6. What aspects of the portfolio will be inspected by school leaders?
7. Where is the portfolio kept? For how long will it be kept?
8. In what ways is the portfolio relevant to teachers' work?
9. What is there in the portfolio that you expect or did not expect to see? What surprises are there?
10. Is there any kind of personalised report included in the portfolio?
11. What format is the portfolio?
12. Is the portfolio mandatory for each teacher? Why?
13. Is the portfolio standardised?
14. What are the contents of the portfolio?

APPENDIX 7: Interview Guide for Collegial Dialogue

1. How long did it take to write the policy?
2. What are the reasons/purposes for the policy?
3. Who is the target user of the policy?
4. How were the authors chosen?
5. Where did you get the resources/inputs for writing the policy? (International policies, feedback from teachers, principals)
6. How long have the policy been implemented?
7. What is the current status of implementation?
8. Will there be any plan to revise the policy? Why? When?
9. Were the any issues raised during writing of policy?
10. How did the teachers respond to the policy?
11. What are the policy expectations?
12. Was there any follow-up after the policy has been implemented?
13. What aspect of the policy do you plan to change and why?
14. When was the PPPB policy introduced to teachers?
15. How was the PPPB policy introduced to teachers?
16. How do you monitor the implementation of the PPPB policy?
17. How often is the monitoring done?
18. Who is responsible to ensure the policy implementation at school level?
19. What kind of supports and resources were provided to implement the policy?
20. What key activities were completed during policy implementation?
21. Did the policy result in the anticipated outputs?
22. Were there any unintended consequences during the implementation of the policy?
23. What external factors influenced the policy implementation?
24. How did teachers respond to the policy?

APPENDIX 8: Economic Panning Unit (EPU) Approval Letter

UNIT PERANCANG EKONOMI
Economic Planning Unit
Jabatan Perdana Menteri
Prime Minister's Department
Blok B5 & B6
Pusat Pentadbiran Kerajaan Persekutuan
62502 PUTRAJAYA
MALAYSIA

Telefon : 603-8000 8000

Ruj. Tuan:
Your Ref.:

Ruj. Kami: UPE 40/200/19/3326
Our Ref.: (13)

Tarikh: 5 July 2016
Date:

Ms. Faizulizami binti Osmin
[redacted]
Email : faizulizami.osmin@bristol.ac.uk

APPLICATION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN MALAYSIA

With reference to your application, I am pleased to inform that your application to conduct research in Malaysia has been approved by the **Research Promotion and Co-ordination Committee, Economic Planning Unit, Prime Minister's Department.** The details of the approval are as follows:

Researcher's name	:	**FAIZULIZAMI BINTI OSMIN**
Passport No./ I.C No	:	[redacted]
Nationality	:	**MALAYSIAN**
Title of Research	:	**"AN EXPLORATION OF MALAYSIAN TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF CHANGING CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (CPD) POLICY AND PRACTICE: SHIFTING A PARADIGM?"**
Period of Research Approved	:	**3 months (11.7.2016 – 10.10.2016)**

2. Please take note that the study should avoid sensitive issues pertaining to local values and norms as well as political elements. At all time, please adhere to the conditions stated by the code of conduct for researchers as attached.

3. The issuance of the research pass is also subject to your agreement on the following:

a) to ensure submission of a brief summary of your research findings on completion of your research; and

b) to submit three (3) copies of your final dissertation/publication;

4. Thank you for your interest in conducting research in Malaysia and wish you all the best in your future research endeavor.

Yours sincerely,

[redacted]

(**AZRAL IZWAN BIN MAZLAN**)
for Director General
Economic Planning Unit
Prime Minister's Department

Email: azral.mazlan@epu.gov.my
Tel : 03 88725277
Fax : 03 88883798

ATTENTION

This letter is only to inform you the status of your application and <u>cannot be used as a research pass.</u>

c.c

Ketua Setiausaha
Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia
Aras 1-4, Blok E8
Kompleks Kerajaan Parcel E
Pusat Pentadbiran Kerajaan Persekutuan
62604 Putrajaya
(u.p. Dr. Maimunah binti Muda)
Ketua Unit
Sektor Penyelidikan dan Penilaian
Bahagian Perancangan dan Penyelidikan Dasar Pendidikan

KEMENTERIAN PENDIDIKAN MALAYSIA
ARAS 1-4, BLOK E-8
KOMPLEKS KERAJAAN PARCEL E
PUSAT PENTADBIRAN KERAJAAN PERSEKUTUAN
62604 PUTRAJAYA

Telefon: 03-88846591
Faks : 03 88846579

Ruj. Kami : KPMSP.600 3/2/3 Jld ( )
Tarikh : 23 Mei 2016

Ketua Pengarah
Seksyen Ekonomi Makro
Unit Perancangan Ekonomi
Jabatan Perdana Menteri
Blok B5 Aras 4
Kompleks Jabatan Perdana Menteri
Pusat Pentadbiran Kerajaan Persekutuan
62502 PUTRAJAYA
(u.p.: En. Azral Izwan bin Mazlan)

Tuan,

Permohonan Untuk Menjalankan Penyelidikan di Malaysia
Nama: Faizulizami binti Osmin

Dengan hormatnya saya merujuk kepada perkara di atas.

2. Adalah saya diarahkan memaklumkan bahawa permohonan tuan untuk menjalankan kajian bertajuk:

" An Exploration of Malaysian Teachers' Peceptions of Changing Continuing Profesional Development (CPD) Policy and Practice : Shifting a Paradigm ? " diluluskan.

3. Bersama-sama ini disertakan ulasan Bahagian ini ke atas cadangan penyelidikan yang dikemukakan.

Sekian dimaklumkan, terima kasih.

" BERKHIDMAT UNTUK NEGARA"

Saya yang menurut perintah,

[redacted]

(DR MAIMONAH BINTI MUDA)
Ketua Unit
Sektor Penyelidikan Dan Penilaian
Bahagian Perancangan dan Penyelidikan Dasar Pendidikan
b.p. Ketua Setiausaha
Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia

Salinan Dahui Asal Dan Sah

[redacted]

Up Pegawai Pengarah
Unit Perancang Ekonomi
Jabatan Perdana Menteri

AZRAL IZWAN BIN MAZLAN
Ketua Penolong Pengarah
Seksyen Ekonomi Makro
Unit Perancang Ekonomi
Jabatan Perdana Menteri

APPENDIX 9: Ethical Guidelines and Research Ethics Form

GSoE RESEARCH ETHICS FORM

It is important for members of the Graduate School of Education, as a community of researchers, to consider the ethical issues that arise, or may arise, in any research they propose to conduct. Increasingly, we are also accountable to external bodies to demonstrate that research proposals have had a degree of scrutiny. *This form must therefore be completed for each piece of research carried out by members of the School, both staff and students*

The GSoE's process is designed to be supportive and educative. If you are preparing to submit a research proposal, you need to do the following:

1. **Arrange a meeting with a fellow researcher.** The purpose of the meeting is to discuss ethical aspects of your proposed research, so you need to meet with someone with relevant research experience. A list of prompts for your discussion is given below. Not all these headings will be relevant for any particular proposal.
2. **Complete the form on the back of this sheet.** The form is designed to act as a record of your discussion and any decisions you make.
3. **Upload a copy of this form and any other documents (e.g. information sheets, consent forms) to the online ethics tool at:** https://dbms.ilrt.bris.ac.uk/red/ethics-online-tool/applications**.**

Please note: Following the upload you will need to answer ALL the questions on the ethics online survey and submit for approval by your supervisor (see the flowchart and user guides on the GSoE Ethics Homepage).

If you have any questions or queries, please contact the ethics co-ordinators at: gsoe-ethics@bristol.ac.uk

Please ensure that you allow time before any submission deadlines to complete this process.

Prompts for discussion

You are invited to consider the issues highlighted below and note any decisions made. You may wish to refer to relevant published ethical guidelines to prepare for your meeting. See http://www.bris.ac.uk/education/research/networks/ethicscommittee/links/ for links to several such sets of guidelines.

1. Researcher access/ exit
2. Information given to participants
3. Participants right of withdrawal
4. Informed consent
5. Complaints procedure
6. Safety and well-being of participants/ researchers
7. Anonymity/ confidentiality
8. Data collection
9. Data analysis
10. Data storage
11. Data Protection Act
12. Feedback
13. Responsibilities to colleagues/ academic community
14. Reporting of research

Be aware that ethical responsibility continues throughout the research process. If further issues arise as your research progresses, it may be appropriate to cycle again through the above process.

Name(s): **Faizulizami Osmin**

Proposed research project: PhD, working title - **An exploration of Malaysian teachers' perceptions of changing Continuing Professional Development (CPD) policy and practice: Shifting a Paradigm?**

Proposed funder(s): **The Ministry of Education, Malaysia**
Discussant for the ethics meeting: **Miguel Cerna Carceres**
Name of supervisor: **Dr Angeline M. Barrett**
Has your supervisor seen this submitted draft of your ethics application: **Yes**

Short summary of the research project:
The study investigates Malaysian teachers' perceptions of the Ministry of Education's (MOE) changing expectations of their engagement in Continuing Professional Development (CPD). The research will analyse the concept of CPD that shapes and informs the new education policy and explore teachers' perceptions of this policy. The study examines the process of change in education concentrating on the place and potential of teachers' CPD within this complex process. In doing so, the emergence of the new Malaysian CPD policy is documented in the light of a historical account of the development of education in the Malaysian context and, in particular, with reference to the origins, nature and development of the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013 – 2025. This helps to clarify the broader rationale behind the current educational reforms. The theoretical foundation for this research is developed from the international literature mainly on teacher professional development and global reform agenda. A qualitative, interpretivist approach underpins the gathering and analysis of data. This includes documentary analysis, collegial dialogue, semi-structured interviews and field observations. Thematic analysis will be used to analyse the data for this research as it allows for flexibility. Conclusions consider the implications of the research for ongoing Malaysian policy and practice, and for the broader theoretical literature relating to educational reform and CPD in particular. To achieve this end, this research will be conducted in two phases, for the duration of three months (June – September 2016).

In the **first phase**, I will begin with documentary analysis of policy documents including the PPPB policy, the Blueprint and CPD circulars. Next, a collegial dialogue with ten PPPB authors will be carried out. This session will be conducted at the TED because the location is most convenient as most of the authors work at the Federal Government Administrative Centre in Putrajaya, Malaysia. The authors will be sharing experiences and reflecting on the policy. I will be present as an observer and moderator, and the session will be audio-recorded.

The **second phase** will involve data collection from two types of implementers: the teachers and CPD coordinators. Observation of organized CPD activities and semi-structured interviews with CPD coordinators will be conducted to gain deeper insights into the initial implementation of the PPPB policy. This phase also includes teachers who attend CPD activities organized by the TED. Malaysian teachers not only attend school-based CPD but also CPD organized by the TED and the State or/and District Education Office. Every year, the TED organizes a variety of CPD for

teachers from various backgrounds at a location away from the school setting. The courses often run from two to three days and involve teachers from across the country.

Four focus groups consisting of teachers who attend the CPD activities between July to September 2016 will be carried out at the training location. Two focus groups will be conducted in each session. Teachers will be given opportunities to share their experiences in the initial policy implementation and how it has influenced their CPD involvements and their understanding of their professionalism since then. I will be the moderator of each focus group and the session will be audio-recorded.

Next, I will conduct school observations of the three teachers selected from the focus groups, two weeks after the CPD session. This activity will allow me to observe teachers' experiences and perceptions of the PPPB policy in the context of their everyday school working environment. The context for data collection can influence what participants say. Participants may act differently or create a disguise that is in accordance to what they believe the researcher is studying. Research has shown that teachers' espoused values/believes can diverge from what they practice (Schweisfurth, 2002).

Furthermore, with three teachers, I will be able to take time to build trust and rapport before co-constructing with them a narrative that locate at their response to the PPPB and aspirations related to CPD to their own career biography and their school – its ethos and the kind of students it serves through individual in-depth interviews. Concurrently, I will also have the opportunity to discuss with these teachers their CPD portfolio and plans in depth and with reference to the particular features and demands of their school. Finally a group discussion using WhatsApp application will be carried out with the three teachers to clarify information and as a way to subtly exit the field.

Ethical issues discussed, and decisions taken (see list of prompts overleaf):
I have discussed several ethical issues with Miguel Cerna, a Ph.D. student who is also doing a research on teachers' CPD. The meeting was held on October 26, 2015. The decisions noted here about the ethical procedure to be followed for this research are therefore to be seen as guidelines which reflect a certain point in time prior to data collection. I will need to revisit some of these aspects throughout the research process. The aspects below require immediate consideration and action.

Researcher access, information sheet and informed consent
We discussed about how I will contact the teachers and get them to participate in the study. Miguel asked whether the teachers' participation is voluntarily. Although I have direct contact with the PPPB authors and coordinators as well as access to the database of teachers, I still need to go through the same procedure as other researchers doing research in Malaysia. I must get official approvals from relevant agencies before being able to carry out the fieldwork. Teachers will be invited to participate in the study voluntarily before they begin their CPD session. I have the duty to ensure all teachers are given informed consent by explaining to them what the research is about and that their responses will be analysed and used in my dissertation.

To ensure informed consent, all participants will be given an information sheet (submitted as an appendix to this form – Appendix 7 in Progression Report). This includes information about

myself, my relationship with the university, purpose of the research, details about the complaints procedure and right to withdrawal.

Due to my association with the MOE, teachers may feel obliged to take part in this research as this activity may be interpreted as instructions from the MOE to schools and teachers. I will constantly remind participants that this is an individual research, and this is a requirement for completion of my doctoral degree and their involvement in this research is voluntarily. I will also remind them of their right to withdrawal. To give teachers the option to exit research without appearing to defy or undermine the MOE, I will not include any mention or use of the MOE logo or stamp in the information sheet and consent form.

We discussed how this research may lead to teachers feeling the pressure that they are being assessed to do their best during the school/classroom observation. Miguel asked whether the teachers will receive feedback from me after the observation.

Further action:

1. Initially, I only prepared one consent form for all participants. Miguel suggested that I prepare separate consent forms for participants to avoid misunderstandings with regards to what is required from them. There will be separate consent forms for:
   a. Policy authors/ CPD coordinators
   b. Teachers

2. Voice-recording will be made only with permission from participants. Although this request has been included in the information sheet and consent forms, I will make it a point before and after the interview/focus group session. Since the research will be conducted in several sessions and on different days, it is my responsibility to constantly check for consent. I will secure informed verbal consent before switching on the voice-recorder.

3. School/classroom observation is intended to gain insights of teachers' experience with CPD by identifying evidence from their classroom practice. I will have an informal discussion with teachers, in which I will adopt a friendly collegial position to ensure that the data collection is an affirming and constructive experience for the teacher. If, however I should observe practice that is harmful to students, I will raise this with the teacher and the principal. If it should involve physical or emotional harm to students that I judge to be unacceptable I may also raise it with a supervisor external to the school.

Participants right to withdrawal and complaint procedure

Miguel noted that it is important to give the teachers the space to express their inner feelings during the research. Some teachers may have some concern over the information they revealed during the research. They may disagree with the rationale for the problems discussed and may become defensive towards them. He suggested this to be done through informal conversations, emails and WhatsApp.

Further action:

1. The participants will be informed about their right to withdrawal in the information sheet and consent form (submitted as an appendix to this form – Appendix 7 in

Progression Report). This will be discussed with the participants and their questions will be answered.Inform participants that they can contact me through email: faizulizami.osmin@bristol.ac.uk or WhatsApp for any complaints.

2. At the beginning of each interview or focus group, I will remind participants about their right to withdrawal and how to go about the complaint procedure. I will inform participants about all changes in a transparent and professional way. Often, in Malaysia, the most acceptable way to reject an invitation is by informing it verbally. As I do not want the participants to feel coerced to be involved in this research and to avoid them from the feeling that they are defying or undermining the MOE, I will not request any written rejection.

Participant selection and support

We discussed how the focus group participants are selected. The participants will be selected using purposeful sampling technique as it allows the identification and selection of individuals or groups of individuals that are especially experienced with a phenomenon of interest. On this note, I plan to invite all teachers who attended the CPD session organized by TED to participate in this research. The number of participants for each focus group depends on the number of teachers who agree to be involved in the research. The selection for the three individual teachers will depend on these criteria:

a. Years of experience
b. Subject taught at school
c. Level taught

Miguel urged me to provide additional support for the focus group teachers although in the final phase of the research I will be working closely with only three individual teachers. The reason for this is to motivate and engage teachers in the research project and I can help facilitate collaboration and networking among teachers. They may want to share resources or just to offer support to each other through WhatsApp platform. This is also a strategy for me to subtly exit the field.

Further action:

I will establish a chatroom on WhatsApp for each focus group. Once the WhatsApp group is active, I will shift the responsibility of facilitating (admin) the group to one of the participants. Even so, I will still be a part of each WhatsApp group. The benefit of having this platform is it will allow me to post further questions or to request clarification if needed when I am already back in Bristol. The responses from this may add more to the data I intend to collect in the first place.

I will inform teachers that their participation in this research is considered as a CPD experience that can be recorded in their individual CPD profile. I will prepare a letter of recognition for their involvement in this research. Malaysian teachers need to show proof of their involvement in CPD activities as the CPD profile will be assessed by the principal. This is hoped to further motivate them to participate in similar activity in future.

Safety concerns, anonymity and confidentiality

My personal safety in the field is less worrisome because I will be collecting data in my home country and will be working with people who I am familiar with. Even so, I will make my

whereabouts known to my supervisors and local contacts. Similarly, due to the non-threatening nature of this study and approaches that will be taken, safety concerns seem minimal for participants. Anonymity cannot be guaranteed as the identities of the participants will be known to me and those who are involved in the focus groups. I will do my utmost best to safeguard participants against any possible harm that might affect their lives including harassments and job loss due to the information they share in this study. Although this is very unlikely to happen, in Malaysia, teachers as civil servants are restricted from revealing confidential information or giving negative comments regarding the Government. If such situation were to happen, disciplinary actions may be taken on the teachers.

WhatsApp is a vulnerable platform and data can easily be shared online. I will emphasize 'ethical mindfulness' throughout the research process.

Further action:

I will take these necessary steps to ensure confidentiality:

1. When reporting the research findings, participants will be informed that identifiable information such as place names, job titles, or group names will be removed. However, I may have to make a judgement about what detail to include or exclude in order to protect the identity of the colleague or the reputation of the school.

2. Inform participants that any document which is deem as confidential will be labelled and not for public consumption.

3. Request participants to create alias when using WhatsApp to protect their identities.

4. Explain and remind participants about the implications if they share any information regarding this research which is shared in the WhatsApp to other people or the public community. Although I want this research to stimulate professional debate, there will be a drawback if information or opinions that are considered sensitive are spread irresponsibly as WhatsApp platform is not secure. Participants will constantly be reminded not to name any individuals, students or colleagues in their WhatsApp contributions.

Data storage

Due to the considerable amount of data that will be generated by this research, the following procedure was decided upon:

1. All data including audio recordings, interview transcripts, WhatsApp chats and field notes will be stored on the secure university server.

2. Where necessary, data will also be stored temporarily on my password protected laptop and backed up on a password protected flash drive.
3. All emails will be sent from my university email account: faizulizami.osmin@bristol.ac.uk and the mobile phone that will be used for WhatsApp communication is protected with a password.

Data Protection Act

Since the participants are Malaysian, they will be protected under the Malaysia's Personal Data Protection Act (2010).

Positionality and data trustworthiness

The teachers may give answers or responses in favour of the MOE as the focus groups are conducted at a training location arranged by the MOE. My relationship with the PPPB authors and coordinators may also influence their responses. This relates to the issue of researcher positionality and data trustworthiness in the research due to my position as an education officer.

Further action:

1. To deal with the issue of positionality, I need to continuously be reflexive about how I position myself in this research. I plan to make regular notes of my thoughts and positions by writing a journal throughout this research process.
2. To ensure data trustworthiness, the participants will be asked to respond and verify the content of the interview within a specified time frame. In this way, the participants will be able to withdraw any information they are not comfortable submitting for analysis or to add further information they may not have provided during the session. The individual teachers will also be able to do this via WhatsApp. Such procedures are known as 'member-checking' and serves as an additional check of their consent.
3. As I am not looking to validate my findings, nor do I want to seek confirmation of a truth, member-checking will not be carried out for focus group and collegial dialogue. Rather, I want to present my conceptual thinking and seek thoughts and ideas as to how I could further develop them.
4. The information shared during the focus group will be triangulated through observations, individual interviews and WhatsApp discussion with the three teachers. This process of data collection is important because what teachers say and do may be different. However, due to the multiple methods of data collection, this may also result to different information rather than confirming each other. I plan to have four focus groups and anticipate similar or different results emerging in different groups; this way, the findings may have greater credibility in the eyes of the reader.

Reporting of research

We discussed steps to take in reporting back to participants. I will send a short summary of thesis when it is finished, and to mention this on the information sheet. I will also create a policy brief that highlights the policy recommendations coming out of the research and explains the evidence that lies behind these. However, Miguel raised the concern about some information in this research that is related to the MOE and may be sensitive in nature which may not be suitable to be shared with the participants. Based on the epistemology I'm using as a basis, this research is not seeking to evaluate the policy. This study is investigating the policy from the perspectives of the teachers and how it is understood and implemented at the school/classroom level.

Further action:

I will report the research in a professional way regardless of my position. I will also present and discuss findings with MOE colleagues.

If you feel you need to discuss any issue further, or to highlight difficulties, please contact the GSoE's ethics co-ordinators who will suggest possible ways forward.

Signed: [redacted] (Researcher) Signed: **Miguel Cerna** (Discussant)

Date: 31 October 2015

**By typing your name here, this is equivalent to a signature.*

APPENDIX 10: Participation Information Sheet

Participant Information Sheet

University of BRISTOL

AN EXPLORATION OF MALAYSIAN TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF CHANGING CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (CPD) POLICY AND PRACTICE: SHIFTING A PARADIGM?

What is the research project about?

I am a doctoral student at the Graduate School of Education, University of Bristol, United Kingdom and I seek your help in meeting the requirements of research for a thesis which forms a substantial part of this degree.

Most educational reforms recognize the vital role of teachers, and teacher professional development is often viewed as a crucial factor to effective education reforms. Due to that, teachers are expected to be involved in Continuing Professional Development (CPD) to keep up with the constant change taking place in the education system. It is essential to explore the factors that contribute to teachers' participation in CPD and their reception towards it and towards change. It is also necessary to understand how teachers view and respond to change as it may shed light to effective formulation of policy that will work and the kind of supports that contribute to teachers' reception to it.

What does the research aim to do, and how?

The research aims to investigate the ways in which teachers in Malaysia perceive and implement one recent CPD policy innovation and understand how this educational reform is viewed from the perspective of those who are involved directly in the process. Specifically, the research aims to investigate Malaysian teachers' perceptions of the strengths, limitations and potentials of the *Pelan Pembangunan Profesionalisme Berterusan* (PPPB) policy at the school level.

I will be conducting face to face interviews, focus groups and WhatsApp discussion with secondary school teachers and individuals from the Ministry of Education (MOE), Malaysia to explore:

- teachers' experiences and responses to PPPB policy
- to what extent has the PPPB been implemented successfully at the school level
- to what extent does the new concept of CPD fit the context of education in Malaysia

What does being a participant mean?

You have been asked to take part in an interview or focus group. Your participation is completely voluntary. The information you share in this interview or focus group will be held private and confidential. That is, your identity will not be revealed in the reporting of this study. In writing up the research, I will use pseudonyms and will not disclose the names of schools or organisations. You have the right to withdraw from the study at any time by contacting me.

Will I be recorded? How will I know that you have accurately understood my opinions?

I would like to voice-record this session and I will provide a transcript for you to check. You can make corrections or additions to this transcript so that it accurately reflects your opinions. I will provide this transcript to you within two weeks of the session. You will have up to two weeks to provide feedback by email or phone. If I do not hear from you within that time frame, I will assume that you are happy with the record of the session and do not wish to make any changes.

What happens with my information?

This information will be held and processed for the creation of a doctoral thesis. Any information about you will be held in accordance to the Malaysia's Personal Data Protection Act (2010). Anything that identifies you will be stored safely and password protected. Your name, school or organisation will not be revealed in the reporting of the research.

Will I be able to read the outcome of the research?

If you provide your email address, I will send you a short summary of my thesis once it is finished. This will not be before September 2018. I will also create a policy brief that highlights the policy recommendations coming out of the research and explains the evidence that lies behind these.

If I have other questions or concerns after you leave, what do I do?

In the event that you have further questions about the research, please do not hesitate to contact me at the email address below. If you have any concerns about the research, you may also contact my Doctoral Supervisor whose details are below.

Thank you very much for considering being a participant in this research project.

With best wishes,

[redacted]

Contacts

Faizulizami Osmin
Doctoral Student
faizulizami.osmin@bristol.ac.uk
Graduate School of Education
University of Bristol
35 Berkeley Square
Bristol BS8 1JA
+44 (0) 7591 758 729
Local phone while in country: +6016 382 3062

Professor Michael Crossley
Doctoral Supervisor
m.crossley@bristol.ac.uk
Graduate School of Education
University of Bristol
35 Berkeley Square,
Bristol BS8 1JA
+44 (0) 117 331 4343

APPENDIX 11: Informed Consent Form

University of BRISTOL

AN EXPLORATION OF MALAYSIAN TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF CHANGING CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (CPD) POLICY AND PRACTICE: SHIFTING A PARADIGM?

I, the undersigned, confirm that (please tick box as appropriate):

1.	I have read and understood the information about the project, as provided in the Information Sheet dated _____.	o
2.	I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the project and my participation.	o
3.	I voluntarily agree to participate in the project.	o
4.	I understand I can withdraw at any time without giving reasons and that I will not be penalised for withdrawing nor will I be questioned on why I have withdrawn.	o
5.	The procedures regarding confidentiality have been clearly explained (e.g. use of names, pseudonyms, anonymization of data, etc.) to me.	o
6.	I understand that agreeing to take part means that I am willing to: • be interviewed by the researcher; • allow the interview to be voice-recorded, and transcribed; • make myself available for a further interview should that be required.	o
7.	The use of the data in research, publications, sharing and archiving has been explained to me.	o
8.	I understand that other researchers will have access to this data only if they agree to preserve the confidentiality of the data and if they agree to the terms I have specified in this form.	o
9.	Select only **one** of the followings: • I would like my name used and understand what I have said or written as part of this study will be used in reports, publications and other research outputs so that anything I have contributed to this project can be recognised. • I do not want my name used in this project.	o o
10.	I, along with the Researcher, agree to sign and date this informed consent form.	o

Participant Name		**Researcher Name**	**FAIZULIZAMI OSMIN**
Signature		**Signature**	
Date		**Date**	
Email		**Email**	faizulizami.osmin@bristol.ac.uk

APPENDIX 12: Contextual Information Questionnaire

University of BRISTOL

AN EXPLORATION OF MALAYSIAN TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF CHANGING CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (CPD) POLICY AND PRACTICE: SHIFTING A PARADIGM?

This questionnaire aims to look at your contextual information. All responses will be in complete confidence. No school or individual will be identified in any report of published findings.

1. Are you female or male?

☐ Female ☐ Male

2. How long have you been working in your current position?

…….years

3. Please indicate your age group.

☐ 20-30 ☐ 31-40 ☐ 41-50 ☐ 51-60

4. Please indicate your grade.

☐ DG41 ☐ DG44 ☐ DG48 ☐ DG52

5. What subject(s) do you teach at school?

……

6. Where is your school located?

……..District ……..State

Thank you for your co-operation.

APPENDIX 13: Participant Recognition Letter

To Whom it May Concern

This letter is to confirm the participation of _____ in the PhD research titled "An exploration of Malaysian teachers' perceptions of changing Continuing Professional Development (CPD) policy and practice: Shifting a Paradigm?" which was carried out from **06th July 2016 to 31st August 2016**.

In the event that you have further questions about the research, please do not hesitate to contact me at the email address below. If you have any concerns about the research, you may also contact my Doctoral Supervisor whose details are below.

Thank you very much for being a participant in this research project.

Sincerely,

[redacted]

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